Pulpit Preaching

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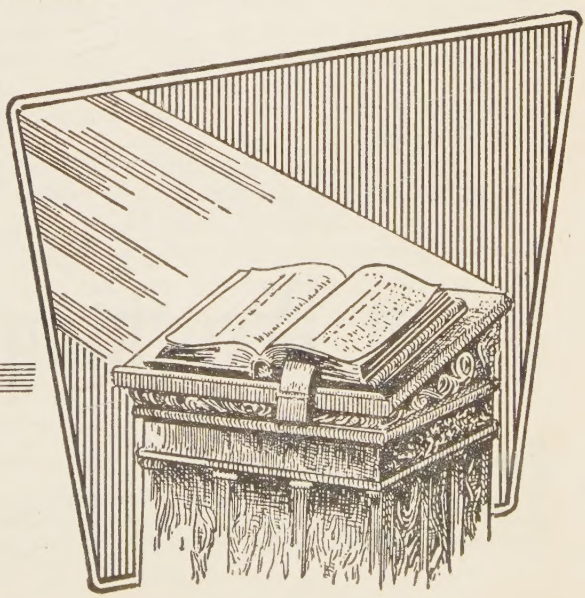

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

Pulpit prayers by Dr. Lowell M. Atkinson, pastor of the First Methodist Church, Englewood, New Jersey, are included in this month's issue which features sermons on the themes, "Profile of Christ" and "Enjoyment of Life."

Next month's topic will be "The Breadth of a Christian's Concern." February themes will be "Season of Renewal" and "The Easter Confidence." The March issue will emphasize "Christ's Larger Family."

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Books For Pulpit Preaching

The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible, ed. by George Ernest Wright & Floyd Vivian Filson (Westminster Press, $7.50)

The Bible as History, by Werner Keller (William Morrow & Co., 452 pp., $5.95)

Modern Apocrypha by Edgar J. Goodspeed (Beacon Press, 124 pp., $2.75)

The Church under the Cross by J. B. Phillips Macmillan Co., 111 pp., $2.50)

Beginning from Jerusalem by John Foster (Association Press, 92 pp., $1.25)

Jesus and His People by Paul Minear (Association Press, 93 pp., $1.25)

The Christian Man by William Hamilton (Westminster Press, 93 pp., $1.)

The Theology of Calvin by Wilhelm Niesel (Westminster Press, 254 pp., $4.)

The Worth of a Man by Arnold H. Lowe (Harper & Brothers, 184 pp., $3.)

Meeting Life on Higher Levels by Hunter Beckelhymer (Abingdon Press, 96 pp., $1.75)

American Youth in Trouble! by Henry Rische (Fleming H. Revell, 158 pp., $2.50)

The new and revised edition of *The Westminster Atlas to the Bible* is a well-nigh indispensable source book for pastor and teacher, Bible student and Christian layman. Up-dating archaelogical and manuscript discoveries, the new edition includes materials not previously found in similar volumes. There is an abundance of maps, illustrations and chronological data, together with all information essential to an understanding of biblical times.

An intriguing and rewarding examination of archaeology and science is to be found in

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Worth Quoting

"Nominal Christianity," "Christianity without tears," may seem to have a certain limited virtue. Nominal Christians are frequently honest, kind and unselfish. To be fair, it is by no means always their fault that they are nominal Christians. Most of them have never been shown or taught that Christianity is inescapably the Way of the Cross, and that no person or situation is ever changed or redeemed without cost to someone. But, whether the nominal Christian is aware of it or not, he is in fact dodging the Cross, and in so doing becomes a stumbling block to the newly converted and a brake upon the progress of the true Church of committed Christians.

J. B. Phillips, *The Church Under The Cross* (Macmillan & Co.)

* * * *

According to the French biologist, Le comte du Nouy, men are now on a new frontier of growth. Evolution in the old physical sense is no longer a factor in man's development. He has reached the stage where his growth must be in mind and spirit which is a voluntary thing. In this next phase of his development, man may cooperate with his Creator in his creation. His next development is to shake free of his lower nature even as he has shaken free of his physical environment—by mastering it. We have room to grow toward this higher degree of freedom. Man was not yet free when his life was still determined by physical forces outside himself. Nor is he free when he is determined by the more primitive itches and impulses of his own body. We can never in this life become disconnected from our bodies any more than we can become disconnected from our physical environment. But we can transfer the seat of control increasingly from the lower centers of our beings into the higher centers, and respond to more subtle and refined calls

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Pulpit Preaching

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ARMIN C. OLDSEN
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Vision of Christ's Divinity

ARMIN C. OLDSEN, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lakeville, Ohio

After six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and He was transfigured before them. —*Mark 9:2*

Which of all the scenes in history or in world would you most like to have seen? r choices will vary widely. One will pick thrilling Victoria Falls; another the ma- tic Grand Canyon of the Colorado; still other the inspiring Swiss Alps. Many of would select a scene from the life of rist our Lord. There, too, our choices uld differ. One would most like to have n the infant Redeemer in Bethlehem's nger; another the almgihty Christ still- the raging tempest on the Sea of Galilee; l another the triumphant, resurrected rist rising to heaven. We'll all have to mit though that one of the most unforget- le, one of the most helpful views of all es is that of our transfigured Lord. Shall look at it together? When the Christian rch moves away from Christmas and the r-appealing story of the Savior's birth l from Epiphany with its many ever- illing stories of the Savior's glory and pares for Lent with its ever-touching ry of the Savior's suffering and death, often pauses to take another look at the nsfigured Christ on the mountain. She members that scene even when she sees rist in pain on the cross. And above rist's fearful cry of anguish, she can hear voices of God the Father, "This is My oved Son."

The transfiguration of Christ came at an expected, yet most opportune time. For first time Christ had clearly and empha- ally revealed to His disciples the startling ormation that He was on His way to y of Jerusalem to suffer at the hands of leaders of His nation, to die on the cross, d to rise from the dead on the third day. r six days the disciples had puzzled over strange and shocking announcement. At at point our story sets in. It was probably the close of another exhausting day of ieving the pain and sorrow of the people at Christ left the crowd and heat for the ol solitude of a mountain. He wanted to nverse prayerfully with His Father. He ok with Him the three disciples to whom He seems to have been most intimately at- tracted: Peter, the rock man, and the broth- ers, James and John, called the Sons of Thunder. They were soon to be witnesses of His terrible agony in the Garden of Geth- semane. He wanted to prepare them for that crushing ordeal with a vision of His divinity, never before nor since beheld by human eyes.

CHRIST IN PRAYER

How long Christ had been praying in the peaceful darkness of the mountain, gaining strength for the struggle that loomed ahead as an ever darkening shadow we do not know. Nor do we know how long the dis- ciples had been sleeping, failing to gain the strength of soul, they too would soon need desperately. The Son of God prays while the children of men sleep. It must have been toward morning when an amazing change came over Christ as He prayed. The sacred writers seem to be at a loss for words to describe fully what happened. Matthew says: "And His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." Mark reports: "And His garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them." Luke writes excit- edly: "The appearance of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became dazzl- ing white." It was only a ray of Christ's divine glory that had been His from eternity but human language could not do justice to it. How can man fully describe the glory of God? There is nothing on earth fittingly to be compared to it: whiter than snow, bright- er than the sun. Most amazing, isn't it? Yet the truly amazing fact is that Christ did not always shine with a light to put to shame the brilliance of the sun. "For in Him," as Paul puts it, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Do you remember how Moses looked when he came down from the mountain after speaking with God? So brightly did his face shine that he had to cover it with a veil be-

cause the children of Israel were blinded by it. But the light in the face of Moses was a reflected glory. Do you remember how young Stephen looked as he defended his preaching and miracles before the members of the council? We are told, they looked at him and saw his face as though it had been the face of an angel; but that too was a reflected glory. The radiance of Christ on the mountain was His very own. The Greek word which Matthew used and which has been translated with the word transfigured is one which denotes an inward, not an outward change. The divine glory of Christ did not suddenly come over Him as though God had turned a great spot light on Him. That glory had always been there. Now it was simply shining through.

MOSES AND ELIJAH

That was not all. Two men stepped out of the past: Moses, the venerable law-giver, whose unknown tomb had been sealed by God Himself, and Elijah, the zealous reformer who had left earth in a blazing chariot. The frightened disciples heard the visitors speak with Christ about His impending death, the announcement of which had so upset them.

Nor was that all. In the excitement of the moment, Peter suggested in his typically impulsive manner, that three cabins be built in that blessed place. It would be wonderful to stay there always! Then a bright cloud, symbolizing the presence of God, the Father, suddenly passed over them. In reverence and amazement they listened as a voice spoke to them out of the cloud, words of eternal significance, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him." Then the vision of Christ's divine glory faded. Once more he stood before them as they had always known Him. The little company left the mountain of transfiguration and descended into the valley of everyday living where the glory of God is easily forgotten because there is so much pain and ugliness. Strengthened by the experience, Christ moved on toward Jerusalem and the death on the cross so that the brief vision of divine glory, granted to Peter, James, and John, might become permanent for all who by faith accept Him as their Savior.

USE OF INTELLIGENCE

As we today look back to the scene on the mount of transfiguration in the long ago, we may be inclined to be critical of the disciples because they were so completely bewildered by the vision of Christ's divinity. Some years ago Dr. Joseph Jastrow wrote: The use of intelligence is the highest privilege and the deadliest menace of humanity. By the use of intelligence modern man has added remarkably to the length, convenience and enjoyment of life. But by an overemphasis on intelligence and a complete rejection of faith, modern man has often lost his own soul. A little boy asked a physics professor: "What is gravity?" The professor answered: "Gravity is a strange force that draws everything toward the center of the earth." The lad responded: "I don't believe it." The skepticism of the boy in no way detracted from the truth of the professor's statement. What may appear to be utter nonsense to a little boy, may be clear truth to a college professor. What is beyond the understanding of man and his created mind may still be profound truth to God, the Creator. Great religious truth man must accept by faith even when he cannot fully comprehend it by intelligence. It was Augustine, noted early church father who said: "Faith is reason at rest in God.' I'll understand what I can about God and my understanding will grow with the years. When I cannot understand what the Bible reveals about God, I'll simply believe it. What kind of God would God be if I fully understood Him? He would no longer be God.

Today many would make of Christ merely a friendly, helpful human — a man with a heart of gold, a smile on His face, and a glad hand for everyone — and ignore the fact that He is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. It's all an old mistake. It started even before Peter, James, and John had seen their vision of Christ's glory. Some of Christ's own generation wanted to make of Him a national leader who would drive the hated Romans out of their country. Some tried to make Him a king who would provide for all their earthly needs. Even before Christ had been born there had been those who expected Him to stand on the shores of the Mediterranean and with His mighty power to command the sea to pour at His feet all the wealth that lay therein that they might all become rich. How they needed a vision of the divinity of Christ!

EYES OF FAITH

The vision of Christ's divine glory cannot be seen with our physical eyes, but only with the eyes of faith. Painters, therefore, cannot satisfactorily reproduce it. Few artists have ever attempted the transfiguration scene. One of them deserves comment

en Sanzio Raphael, king of painters, s only a young man, but had already duced so many pictures and such good s that others marveled at the quantity l quality of his work, on order of Car- al di Medici he turned to a portrayal the transfiguration. It was to be his last mposition and one of his finest. In fact, my regard it as his masterpiece. He was ver quite satisfied with it and when he d unexpectedly in 1520 at the age of rty-seven he had not completed it. Un- the stress occasioned by the untimely th of the master, one of his pupils has- put the finishing touches to the paint- called "The Transfiguration" so that could stand at the head of the coffin as artist lay in state. No doubt Raphael's he Transfiguration" is a most worthy ce of art and belongs among the greatest ntings of all times, but it falls far short satisfactorily reproducing the vision of rist's divine glory seen by the three dis- les shortly before Christ's death.

We cannot paint divinity and we cannot fully understand it. Webster once said: "If I could comprehend Jesus Christ, I could no believe on Him. Then He would be no greater than myself. Such is my consciousness of sin and inability that I must have nothing short of a superhuman Savior." Bishop Moule expressed it this way: "A Christ who is not quite God is a bridge broken at the farther end." A Christ who is nothing more than man will never be able to get me from earth to Heaven.

On this side of eternity we will never behold a vision of Christ's divinity with our physical eyes, but with the eyes of faith we can clearly see Him. With all our hearts we can love Him and believe in Him; with all our life we can praise Him. We join Tennyson in the verse:

Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom we who have not seen Thy face
By faith and faith alone embrace
Believing where we cannot prove.
That's a vision of Christ's divine glory.

he Originality of Jesus

THEODORE P. FERRIS, Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts

One of the impressions that Jesus made people was that he was different from ybody they had ever seen before. He was forgettable because he was so complete- unlike anybody they had ever met. He not talk like any of the people they re used to listening to, especially the re- ious teachers and preachers of their day. ere was a freshness about what he said. always imagine him speaking quietly, not outing the way some preachers do, but aking with the quietness that comes m inner certainty and gives the impres- n of an irresistible authority. What he d to say he said simply and, as they lis- ed to him, they went away saying, ever man spake as this man."

And he did not act like anyone else that y had known before. In some ways, of urse, he acted just the way everybody e did; he ate three meals a day, and he pt at night, he walked from one place to other. But he did things that other people uld not do. He had a strange, extraordi- ry sort of power which enabled people be well when they had been sick, and to egrate themselves and get up and live sitive, affirmative lives when they had en disturbed and tormented spirits.

Also, he didn't do some things that other ople did do, and to their amazement. For e thing, he tried to keep his success a secret. Imagine that! He had no interest in promotion. He would have been out of place entirely in our publicity-conscious world and out of sympathy with the emphasis that we put upon promoting things. He was so busy devoting himself to the thing at hand that he didn't have much time or energy left to promote it. So, the people went away, seeing these extraordinary things that he did that nobody else could do, saying, "We never saw anything like this before."

ABSOLUTELY UNIQUE

This general impression that Jesus was different gradually grew into the belief that he was absolutely unique and original in every way and in everything. The things that he said were never said by anybody before or since, and Christians came to believe that Jesus is the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth, and that there is no Truth in anyone else, in any other religious teacher, or any other religious tradition that is outside the orbit of his influence, is outside the realm of Truth. As they looked back upon the events of his life, they came to feel that his whole life was entirely different from the lives of men and women who had gone before and who have come after him. His birth was different, his boyhood was different, his body was dif-

ferent. He knew everything that anybody ever could know, and more than any man could know; he had an omniscience like the omniscience of God Himself. He could do anything he wanted to do; he was subject to no laws of nature or man.

Many people today, I think, feel that his claim to authority, that is, his authority over their lives, rests very largely on this particular kind of originality. To put it in a visual image, the rest of human life is a broad, flat plateau and in the center of it rises one lonely, majestic, isolated peak. That peak is Jesus, entirely unrelated to the rest of human life, entirely apart from the rest of existence; the grandeur of it, the proportions of it have nothing in common with the lives of p e o p l e like us. This, strangely enough, appeals to Americans particularly, who often mistake novelty for creative genius, and assume that the man who gets there first is necessarily the first man.

This sort of originality, therefore, which has grown up like a shrine around the life of Jesus, is something that is worth thinking about. Is this the real originality of Jesus, or does it lie in another direction and, if so, where?

CHRIST'S OWN CLAIMS

Interestingly enough, Jesus himself seems to make no such claim. At least it is not indicated in the Gospels that he made any claim to this kind of originality. When someone asked him what the two great commandments were, he didn't give them two new commandments of his own. He quoted two old commandments, one in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, and one in Leviticus 19:18: "Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God, and thou shalt love him with all thy heart and soul, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." When he sent his disciples out, he told them to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils." In other words, he told them to do exactly the things that he was doing. And when they came back and reported that they had been successful in doing some of those things, he rejoiced.

If anybody should have asked him how he ever came to think of the Fatherhood of God, implying somehow that it was an original idea of his, I am sure he would have said: "Why, I was brought up on the idea of the Fatherhood of God, my mother taught me that when I was a child, it has been a part of our religion way back through the generations, that was not an original idea of mine, nor was the Kingdom; these were things that I inherited from my family and my nation, these were not original with me."

And later, the writers of the New Testament seem to make no such claim as we sometimes make for the originality of Jesus. They, themselves, tell with approval a story of how Peter walked on the water himself, until he got frightened and began to sink. They tell the story of Peter and John, how they healed the lame man at the beautiful gate of the Temple. According to the stories they tell, Peter raised Dorcas from the dead, and Paul was able, we are thankful to say, to restore Eutyches to life. He was sitting in the window and, because Paul preached such a long sermon, he went to sleep and fell out of the window, and would have died if Paul had not saved him.

"No man is an island"; no man is entirely unrelated to those around him, to the people who have gone before him, or to the people who come after him. His roots, his foundations, go down deep into the subsoil until he strikes the lower levels where all men are joined together. Jesus knew that, and the writers of the New Testament knew that, and we know it. If all this is true, in what sense, then, was Jesus really different? In what way can we speak of the real originality of Jesus? No one, I am sure, can put into words what the real originality of Jesus consists in, and I certainly would be the last one to claim to do it. I put down some of the things, not trying to generalize them too much, that seem to me to be the qualities in Jesus that I find in no other.

JESUS WENT FURTHER

First he went further along one line than anyone else had ever gone. The Old Testament talked about a loving God, and the writers of the Old Testament were rich in the love and mercy of God. They promised to a man who was a sinner that God would forgive him, that God was willing to forgive him whenever he as willing to turn and come back to God. Jesus went further. Jesus said, God is not only willing to forgive you when you are willing to come back to Him; He goes out to look for you. Nobody had ever gone that far, to think of God in all His moral grandeur, not only willing to receive those who had broken every commandment that He made, but going out like a shepherd to look for the lost sheep and bring him back to himself.

The men who wrote the Old Testament and who lived it out, knew what "love thy

ghbor" meant, and they knew that the ationship between neighbors must be one love and understanding and intelligent e. They knew, in a sense, that a man d to love his neighbor as he loved him- f. But Jesus went further. He said, The e that God has shown to you means that e love you must show to your fellowmen st include not only your neighbor, but ur enemy also, your competitor, your ri- l, the person that seeks to pull you down o the muck and mire. That is the person u must reach out to and clothe with the auty of your love and understanding. w much we need to appreciate those fur- er ranges of Jesus!

JESUS AS GUIDE

Then, also, he arranged things in a dif- ent order than other people did. Just one two examples. Life, you know, consists all of us of spiritual values and mate- l things. Some people have great diffi- ty in knowing how to arrange them, in owing which comes first. Most of us, uspect, most of the time, put the material ngs first; not all the time, certainly. Some ople have been misled so that they ex- de entirely the material things in life and to live and breathe the things of the irit only. Jesus eliminated neither one nor e other, but he put them together in a w arrangement, and he said, "Seek ye *st* the Kingdom, and all these things all be added unto you."

Life consists of public worship, that is, e giving of ourselves to God in public acts prayer, and it also involves private rela- nships and responsibilities. The ques- n is (and this is a question that has tor- nted people down through the ages) ich comes first, which takes priority? u never know where Jesus is going to ce the priority until you get to the point ere he puts his finger on it. This time it uld surprise you if you didn't know him eady. He said, If you are on your way to urch and you remember that your brother s something against you or you against ur brother, *first* be reconciled to your other, and then go to church.

One of the things that all of us do all e time is to make judgments about other ople and about ourselves, and it is im- rtant that we do. We have to make judg- nts, and we have to criticize the acts and oughts of other people because we are itical human beings and because we have e faculty of critical judgment and deci- n. The question is, Which do you do first? Jesus put his finger right on it when he arranged these two things in a new order, "*First* cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then you can see clearly to take the mote out of thy brother's eye." O how we need someone to guide us through these labyrinthine ways of conflicting and competing claims!

DECISION REQUIRED

Another thing that has recently impressed me about Jesus is that his teaching always points to a decision. Most ethical and religious teaching is in abstract terms of principle, and there is a sense in which the teaching of Jesus can be studied as such, and I have often expounded it that way. "He that loseth his life shall find it" is a revelation of an everlasting law of life, true under all circumstances and at all times. "To him that hath shall be given" is another such principle. We were discussing it the other night in our group of married couples, and they explored it from every angle, and discussed it and argued about it —what it meant, was it fair or just that to him that already has something shall be given something more and from the poor man who hasn't anything shall be taken away what he has. The more we discussed it, the more complicated it became, and the more bogged down we were in theoretical mire, and coming to no conclusion. Finally, we said, Let's look at the situation. This is not set forth by Jesus as an abstract, philosophical principle that may apply in every case. It was spoken after he had told them of the Parable of the Sower. As he looked at them, he could see perfectly clearly that some of them were eagerly taking it in, and some of them were not making any effort at all to take it in. Their minds were shut up tight like houses for the night. They were letting it run off their souls like water, the way they always did. He was speaking to that situation, as though to say, You'd better take this in; I am saying something that is of the utmost importance and, if you don't take this in, you will not take in the next thing or the next thing; you will take nothing in, you will lose everything you have, for "to him that hath shall be given." The riches of the spirit are accumulative. This is the time to start your account. The teaching, you see, pointed to a decision, as though to say to that crowd, You have to decide whether you are going to open the doors of your minds and hearts to the spirit that is confronting you or whether you are going to close them and go off in

the other direction. Now which are you going to do?

That is teaching with a difference. You might say that he had the kind of originality that Shakespeare had. I always compare him with other great human beings with some reluctance because some people thereby assume that I am putting him in the same class, and I am not. I am simply saying that he had the same kind of originality that Shakespeare had. They both borrowed material out of which they made things brand new. I am not sure, and I didn't have time to look at every one of his plays, but I think that there are not many plays of Shakespeare in which the plot is not borrowed either from Plutarch's Lives, Holinshed's Chronicles, or from some play by a continental or English author. Shakespeare borrowed the basic material, and then smelted it, forged it into something brand new. Jesus borrowed the idea of the Fatherhood of God, and let it go through that intense, human experience of his in which he felt a complete oneness in union with his Father in heaven, so that he could say to his disciples, "No man hath known the Father but the son, and him to whom the Son shall reveal him." And when the Fatherhood of God came out of that furnace-like experience it was no more like the Fatherhood of God that appears in the Psalms than day is like night. It was warmed into life, transformed, transfigured, into something absolutely new and different that has appeale to the hearts and minds of people ever since.

THE LIFE HE LIVED

What is more, he did what others talked about. In Dr. Morison's great book about Columbus he reminds us in the very beginning of it what perhaps we should all know and do not. "That it was theoretically possible to reach the Orient by sailing west every educated man would admit, since every educated man knew the earth to be a sphere, but nobody had done anything to test the theory. . . . Most sensible people admitted that a voyage west to China could be mad and a few said it should be done, but nobody cared to try." Everybody in the time of Jesus, brought up in a synagogue, kne that God was King, everybody knew that the Will of God should be obeyed as a subject obeys a king; everybody knew that it should be done, but not many cared to try. Undoubtedly, there were some then who knew that love was the greatest thing in the world, that it could cast out all fear and that it could draw man and God together in an everlasting union that would carry him through everything, but nobody cared to try. Jesus did it; he acted as though God were King, he acted as though God was his Father whom he could trust; he loved as though love were the greatest thing in the world, even though men nail it and hang it to a tree. He did it! So this was another thing that made him different.

GOD IN HIM

Yet in a sense, none of these is the clue to the real originality of Jesus, surprising as that may seem. The thing that makes him original in the real sense is nothing that he said, or did, or even was. It wa something that was done in him and through him by Somebody else. Life has a way every once in a while of reaching down into humanity and picking up some one person and using that person to articulate and glorify some particular phase of life. The originality of Lincoln was not in anything that he said about slavery or democracy, great as these things were. Lincoln's real originality lies in the fact that life at one moment in our history reached down and picked him up and used him as its vessel, its voice to speak to all the people of this nation about great issues, and to draw them to a grea cause.

The original thing about Jesus is that God took Jesus, this normal and human life, in many ways very much like ours and used him, to so speak, to reveal Himself to you and me, to speak to us, to tel us what He is like, to show us what the possibilities of life are when life is lived under the Love and Will of God. The real originality of Jesus and the thing that makes him everlastingly different from everybody else is, it seems to me, the fact that God in him does something to you and me that nobody else does, that God draws us to Himself in Christ, and gives us that kind of assurance and freedom from fear and guil that we have in no other way. This is the thing that makes Jesus different from any other human being that ever walked th earth, the fact that God was in Him, reconciling, winning the world to himself. He stands among the spiritual heroes of th race as he stood on the Mount of Transfiguration between Moses and Elijah. But in the end, they all disappear and we see no man, save Jesus only.

Who Is Jesus?

CHARLES L. ALLEN, Grace Methodist Church, Atlanta, Georgia

Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God. —*Matthew 16:16*

Someone has asked me to give my answer the question, "Who is Jesus?" That is a rilling question, yet it is very difficult to t an answer into words. My first thought s to read some of my books to see how hers have said it, but even in my small rsonal library there are so many books out Him that I could not read them all in year. The poets, historians, philosophers, eologians, novelists have all sought to say ho Jesus is.

Instead of trying to select a book to read, felt impressed to sit for a time and just ink about Him. One by one the pictures Him in my mind began coming into view. saw a lovely young mother sitting in a able by a manger. I heard a baby cry and sounded just like my own babies sounded hen they cried. I saw a young man living a tiny village, playing with other boys, ing to school, working in a little carpenr's shop.

Maybe Joseph died while Jesus was still boy. There were other children in the me. Maybe the support of the family fell His shoulders. Without knowing exactly w I got that picture, it is the one I have. was not until He was thirty years of age at He was freed from His family responbility and could go out and preach. He ved to read and maybe He regretted that e did not get the opportunity of a college ducation.

SCENES OF HIS LIFE

For three years He walked about the untryside and preached to those who ould listen. He must have been a lonely an. Though He made close friends and, at mes, was surrounded by multitudes of peo-e, still in every man there is a deep long-g for a home, for a woman he loves, for ttle children to call his own. Jesus never ad that.

After a while the crowds turned against im, one of His friends betrayed Him, and e others ran away. Without even one per-n to defend Him, He was tried by unfair urts on untrue charges. He was con-emned to death early one morning and by oon the sentence was carried out. He was ailed to a cross and between two thieves e died. The only property He left was the at He wore and the soldiers gambled for hat. Had it not been for the courtesy of a friend He would not even have had a grave in which to be buried.

It is not difficult for me to picture in my mind the scenes of His life, and yet it strikes me forcibly that I do know that much about Him. I do not know as much about Caesar who was the ruler of the world at that time, or about Pilate, the Governor. I do not know even the name of the richest man of that day, or who the socially prominent were.

And though nineteen centuries and more separate my day from His, just thinking about Him has a strange influence upon me. I feel cleaner and happier. I feel kinder and am ashamed of my sins. I feel love for Him and that makes me feel love for others. Just my own fellowship with Him makes me know He was more than Jesus. I know He was Jesus Christ.

FOUR MAIN FACTS

Once Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." We can learn about Jesus by reading about Him, but we learn about Christ through experience. Once we come to know Him, we realize He is divine. There is no doubt in our minds then.

Because so many people only know about Jesus and do not know Christ, they argue about who He is. But there are four facts about Christ that for me are completely settled about which I refuse to reconsider.

First, Christ was born without an earthly father. His birth was different from that of any other person who has ever lived. He was not a natural man. He was supernatural. God sent an angel to a pure young woman who told her that she would give birth to the Son of the Highest. She was puzzled and answered, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" The angel told her the Holy Ghost shall be His father. He was God even before He was born.

Second, when He lived on earth He had supernatural power. The winds and the waves obeyed His voice. He could heal every known sickness. He could even raise the dead. He could take one little boy's lunch and feed a multitude of five thousand. He could forgive sins. He could put a song into a broken heart. He could bring hope to the

discouraged and strength to the weary. With Nicodemus I say, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." He imparted power to others and it is still available to men today.

Third, I believe that His death on the cross is my doorway into eternal life. His cross is an example of sacrifice and it is a revelation of God's love, but it is more, much more. That Friday He did something that forever makes a difference in my relationship with God. For those first disciples it was "Black Friday." Their leader was crucified, it seemed that God had forsaken His own. But later on those disciples realized, as St. Paul put it, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." And when men realized that they saw the cross, not as God's desertion of man, but as His saving power, then "Black Friday" became "Good Friday."

Fourth, I believe Christ rose from the dead and His resurrection is my assurance that there is life for me beyond the grave. "Because I live," He said, "ye shall live also." I love the life we have here but I know in a little while someone will carry my body and bury it in the ground. There it will decay. But because I know Christ, I know that will not be the end of me. I shall live in another place.

So, because of who Christ is, I gladly by faith commit my life to Him.

HE STILL LIVES

I know of no person who questions the fact that a man named Jesus once lived in Galilee. Most of us are familiar with the life He lived and the kind of a man He was and as we come to know about Him we say with Richard Gilder: "If Jesus Christ is a man—and only a man—I say: That of all mankind I cleave to Him, and to Him I will cleave alway."

As we come to know about Jesus, even from the cold type of the printed words of the four Gospels, we begin to feel a closeness to Him and a love for Him and He begins to have a strange power over us. So much so that we know, really know, that He was more than a man. So we add Christ to Jesus. Christ means Messiah, it means God. And hosts of people have come to say with Richard Gilder: "If Jesus Christ is a God —and the only God, I swear: I will follow Him through heaven and hell, the earth, the sea, and the air!"

To me the strongest proof that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God come to earth with the power to save men, is not what happened when He was on earth. Rather it is because of what He does for people right today. There was a man who had sold the furniture in his little home to buy liquor and had squandered his money to buy beer. He had become a Christian. One day a friend sneeringly said to him, "You don't really believe that yarn about Jesus turning the water into wine?" The convert replied, "I am an ignorant man. I don't know about water and wine. But I know this, that Jesus Christ has turned beer into furniture! And that is a good enough miracle for me."

Sometime ago I wrote a column in the paper about Sallman's painting, "The Head of Christ." I offered to send a small copy to carry in the billfold of any who wrote me. I had five thousand copies and thought that would be an abundant supply. But I had requests for more than a hundred thousand copies. For several days the post office sent my mail by special truck. How many people would have written for a picture of Shakespeare or of Lincoln or of Washington? We all feel something about Jesus that we feel about no other who ever lived.

MORE THAN A MAN

From those who received those hundred thousand pictures I have had some interesting reports. One man wrote me that he lost his billfold with a considerable sum of money in it. A few days later he received it in the mail with a note from the finder saying, "When I first found this, I fully intended to keep the money. But when I looked at that picture of Christ, I had to send it back." Even a picture of Him does something to people. Of course He was more than just a man.

There was a poor, ignorant Chinese man who was named Lo. The missionaries came and taught him about Christ. They taught him to read and they gave him a Testament. Lo set in to read it, beginning with Matthew. Finally, he came to the last verse of the last chapter. He read that verse but he couldn't believe it. He read it again and sure enough it was true. The rest of his life he thought that verse was written especially for him because it said, "Lo, I am with you alway." There are a lot of people who have felt Him with them and they know that Jesus is really more than one who just lived. He still lives.

ringing the Live to Life

ROBERT E. GOODRICH, JR., First Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas

"I am come that ye might have life and ave it more abundantly." This isn't merely promise or a hope. It is a factual discrip-on of what Christ can do when he is given place in the hearts of people like me and e you.

But what on earth does it mean? "I am me that ye might have life." Obviously it esn't mean he came so that our heart could rt beating, or the blood could start flow-g through our veins, or so our lungs could to work. We already have physical life. an had physical life before Christ came. e wasn't speaking to dead persons about ysical resuscitation. It was to living, mov-g, breathing people that he said, "I have me that you might have life."

Obviously, too, he wasn't talking about ving them luxuries and riches. We have phrase that we sometimes use about a per-n who has everything coming his way and o is finding it easy to get along in a nderful manner. We say, "He's living it . He's really living." Christ didn't come bring that. Instead he challenged his fol-wers to sacrifice, to endure hardship and bear a cross.

Then what does it mean? Why is it one of e great words? Have you seen people who e merely existing, for all their breathing d living and moving about. Have you ever ought that about yourself?

I have been reading about a rather young an who was betrayed by his brother. He as disliked by his parents. His wife, who as the only person in the world he cared out, died in childbirth. This young man nt into a room from which he didn't erge for three months. People would walk and out of it. His family and friends uld try to minister to him, but he was solutely unaware of their presence. He as breathing, his heart was beating, he was ing but he wasn't really alive. He was st existing.

But then there are some persons moving out in good fashion and they drive Thun-rbirds and Cadillacs. There are some peo-e who live under bridges and have no-here to lay their head. But these too are t truly alive. "I am come," said Jesus, hat you might have life." Jesus might have d it like this, "I am come to make you are of certain great qualities." You can asure whether or not a person is alive by e number of things of which he is aware and to which he responds. What are we aware of?

THE AWARENESS OF GOD

"I am come," said Jesus, "that ye might have life." I think it could be put like this: "I am come to make you aware of God." That doesn't mean that you and I need to be persuaded that a God exists. That wasn't the purpose for which Christ came. Men have always believed in God. The most primitive people of which we have any record were able to perceive that there is some Great Spirit, Something above and beyond man. They believed in God. And even in our day, science alone could prove to us, I think, the existence of God. Choose biology or theology or any of the other sciences and push it back to the corner and at last it has to use the first four words of the Bible, "In the beginning God." We didn't need Jesus to persuade us that there was a God. No wonder ninety-three percent of the American people say that they believe in God. That many believe God exists. But to believe in Him is to trust, to love, to count on Him, to accept Him. And Christ came to bring the live to life by making them aware of the kind of a God, one in whom we can believe.

A friend tells of taking his secretary to a church during a series of noonday services. That day the preacher talked about the revelation of God through Christ. This girl had only been in this country six months. Her father was Italian and her mother was Jewish. After the service was over and they were walking back to their office, the secretary said to this man: "You know after that service about Christ, I think I feel a little kindlier toward God. I don't think I will be so afraid of him any more." There hadn't been any doubt in her mind that there was a God, but Christ was beginning to make her aware of a God whom she could trust, whom she could love, to whom she could turn. Until that happens, faith in God is impossible. "I am come that ye might have faith."

THE AWARENESS OF OURSELVES

Second, "I am come that ye might be aware of yourself." Nobody could be alive until he knows who he is. Yet there are so many pressures of our day piling in upon us to take away any understanding of who we are. Just a number, a case, a number.

Stand in line and somebody gives you a number. They don't call your name; they call your number: Mr. Twenty-two. Mr. Forty-four. In some places your social security number is more important than your name when you want to cash a check. How many of us are case number sixty-three or eighty-five in somebody's file. Maybe we ought to adopt a number and give up this business of names.

But it is not only numbers. The other day a woman was being wheeled down the corridor of the hospital and a young doctor walked up to her and said, "Are you an appendectomy?" And she said, "No, I'm a human being." I admire her answer. That is what I would have felt like saying to him. So we begin to classify people that way.

And there is the materialistic concept which reduces persons to what they are composed of. Only that is real which can be counted or measured or analyzed or classified. On that basis what is Glen Johnson? Well, he is oxygen, hydrogen, carbon and various compounds of these things. Or physiologically what is he? Well, he is an intricate system of nerves and blood vessels and nerves and vital organs and nerves and blood. How much is he worth? Well, the estimate is around $3.69 or $3.70 on today's market. Margaret Terry, the organist, wouldn't be worth quite that much, for it is based upon how much we weigh. Are you worth $3.50 or $3.40? Is that really what you are worth? Is that really what Glen, his music, his personality, his soul is worth? Is that what Margaret is worth? You see, it is very easy to fail to realize who we are or what we are worth until Christ reveals to us that there is a stamp of divinity upon us and shows us that there is a dignity and destiny within us and that every single one of us, whoever we are, is of infinite worth to God. Then we are able to throw our shoulders back and hold our head up straight because we know who we are.

Do you remember the words that Jesus spoke to the adulterous woman? I guess her crime was that she was caught. The men who were ready to stone her were evidently guilty of the same thing. But they were not caught. Therefore, Jesus said to the woman, "Go and sin no more." Implied in those words was forgiveness, but most of all it seems to me the words were telling her: "Go and you can sin no more. You can be faultless in the sight of God. There is a wondrous kind of life that can be yours. Realize who you are." And when Christ makes us aware of who we are, we too can have confidence. The live can come to life.

THE AWARENESS OF OTHERS

Or, thirdly, Christ makes us aware of our fellow man. "I have come to make you aware of your fellow man." When Christ touches a human heart, we understand that we are all children of one Father and belong to the same family. Christ makes us aware of concern for our fellow man. Of course, the inevitable result of this is brotherhood. But it is not brotherhood for the sake of brotherhood. Jesus didn't institute a program of brotherhood for the sake of brotherhood or a policy of any kind. The Good Samaritan walked across the road to minister to the wounded Jew, but he wasn't doing it in observance of Brotherhood Week. It wasn't a policy with him. He wasn't carrying out some order. He couldn't find that in any rule book. He did it because he cared about the man on the other side of the road. If concern and care and understanding and sympathy are present in a human heart then brotherhood will take care of itself. Of course, the very word, brotherhood has almost become a trigger word in our day of tension. Just say it today and you can feel some people bristle because this is a day of change and change is always difficult.

I read the other day about an old man who was celebrating his hundredth birthday. Seth Abernathy was his name. A reporter from one of the dailies, talking to old Seth on his hundredth birthday, said to him, "Pop, I bet you have seen a lot of changes in your day." And he said, "Yes and I've been against every 'dern' one of them." Most of us are against changes. The adjustment to them is difficult. The old man's life had been miserable because of the changes he had had to survive.

However, the best chance of solution is with Christians. For Christians who have been touched and brought alive by Christ become aware of their fellow man. But some of the reports are frightening. Recently a picture in LIFE showed a person carrying a big placard with these words written on it: "Help save us from the black plague." Now whoever created that sign, for all his breathing and his beating heart, is not really alive. He is a prisoner in a tomb of prejudice and blindness. And no one who lives in a tomb of blindness and prejudice is alive.

But let me report about persons in a whole community, in fact in several communities who have been made alive. It was my privilege for three days to be a part of a preach

g mission called the Appalachian Preach-g Mission. I don't know of anything like it America. There were about 12,000 to 15,-0 people every day in the congregations. adio and television took the services to untless other persons. There were preach-s from many different sections of the coun-y. It was conducted in Bristol, Virginia, Kingsport, Johnson City, and Elizabeth-n, Tennessee. And that's in the old South. ating and participation were without dis-nction in congregation in choir and in eaching. The best chance is with Chris-ans who have been brought alive. Then e follow brotherhood not as a matter of licy, but because we care about other per-ns. Christ makes us aware of others and otherhood takes care of itself. Under-anding and sympathy are born anew in us.

THE AWARENESS OF SIN

Fourth, Christ makes us aware of sin. e doesn't do it by the methods of a sensa-nal preacher who screams condemnation us. He does it by an entirely different ethod. He simply lifts us and gives us a sion of life at its best. Christ gives us a ste of what it is to have fellowship with od. He doesn't need to give us a code book a rule book saying this is wrong and this right. We will know. We will recognize ything that breaks or destroys that fel-wship.

I don't know whether children still play arbles "for keeps." That may be too tame game for our day, but many of us can member when our parents told us, "You n play but don't play for keeps." A man s telling about his own boyhood. He re-embered how his motheer had laid down at very strict principle, but he was down the corner and met a boy who had some autiful marbles. This boy was a natural-poor shot and the man said he just uldn't resist the temptation to play a sim-e game for keeps. So he said, "I came me with a pocket full of beautiful mar-es." "All the rest of that week, there s a gulf between me and my mother. She as the same lovely person as always. But nnewhere now I saw her not as my mother t as my judge." The gulf was real but the ther was the same. It was all on his le. Something like that is the way Christ akes us aware of sin. He makes us aware the changeless love of God. When we sep-arate ourselves from Him, He awakens con-science in us.

I remember a priest who, during the war, came over from London and spoke one evening at a party in Houston. I will never forget his description of the bombing of London. He described the horrors of it and the degradation of the people. For him it was a physical and a spiritual burden. He longed for release. And then he said: "A few months ago I had the opportunity for which I had been waiting. I was offered a parish out of London in a comparatively calm and peaceful section, a very rich and famous parish. "But," he added, "I could not go. For every time I started to leave, the thought of Christ sent me back among my people." You say, "Why it wouldn't have been a sin for him to take a differ-ent parish." Not for you, maybe, but it was for him. There are some things I can't de-fine for you and you can't define for me, but Christ can make us aware and we will know. And they quicken our conscience.

THE AWARENESS OF A PURPOSE

Finally, Christ can make us aware of a purpose. The most pitiable people in the world are those who don't have any rea-son for living. They are not alive. But when a person makes a dedication of his life and has a purpose, he then becomes alive.

Just after the war a young Christian woman went to China as a missionary. One day some visitors were being shown through a hospital in China and they came upon this fine American Christian girl working with the gangrenous wounds of the men in the hospital. One of the visitors, after watching her for a moment, said to her, "You know, I wouldn't do that for a million dollars." And she said, "Neither would I, not for a million dollars." And she wouldn't. She had a purpose and a dedica-tion. She would do it only for that.

Every one of us can have a purpose and a dedication. Our job may be making bricks, but we can also be making Christians. Our job may be serving tables, but our purpose can be to serve Christ. "I am come that ye might have life," said Jesus. "I am come that ye might be made aware of God, of yourself, of your fellow man, of sin and of purpose, in order that ye might have faith and confidence, understanding and sympa-thy, conscience and dedication.

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Continued from page 2

The Bible as History (subtitled, "A Confirmation of the Book of Books"). The author, a German scientific journalist, in his preface writes: "Thanks to the findings of the archaeologists, many of the Biblical narratives can be understood better now than ever before. . . . As Professor Andre Parrot, the world-famous French archaeologist, has said: 'How can we understand the Word, unless we see it in its proper chronological, historical and geographical setting?' . . . . In gathering together and working over the material for this book it seemed to me that the time had come to share with those who read their Bibles and those who do not, with churchmen and agnostics alike, the exciting discoveries which have resulted from a careful examination of the combined results of scientific investigation along many different lines. In view of the overwhelming mass of authentic and well-attested evidence now available, as I thought of the skeptical criticism which from the eighteenth century onward would fain have demolished the Bible altogether, there kept hammering in my brain this one sentence: 'The Bible is right after all!' "

Dr. Goodspeed's *Modern Apocrypha* lays to rest many a strange literary ghost, for this volume is somewhat of an expose of sixteen "biblical" hoaxes, modern gospels which have had considerable circulation and influence. Among these are "The Nazarene Gospel" and "The Confession of Pontius Pilate." The book reads like a first-rate thriller; the author pursues relentlessly and finally exhibits these hoaxes in their true to the light.

The Church under the Cross pays tribute to the "magnificent, unadvertised army" of missionaries who labor under the Cross. Their motivation and compulsion, their adjustments and hardships are interpreted through their messages to the author and through the author's discerning appreciation of the meaning and significance of their undertakings.

Beginning from Jerusalem and *Jesus and His People* are new additions to the splendid World Christian Books series. The former is a concise, readable account of the rise and growth of the Christian Church from the year A.D. 29 to 1700. The latter is a study guide and exposition of Jesus and the Church. The usefulness of both books for the instruction of youth and adults is immediately apparent.

A new addition to the Layman's Theological Library is Dr. Hamilton's *The Christian Man* which emphasizes the Christian doctrine of man and evaluates in an enlightening manner the Christian's attitude toward his physical nature.

Many books have been written in recent years on the life and mind of Calvin. *The Theology of Calvin* is one of the best, for it brings into perspective the basic tenets of Calvinism and appraises his position with vigor and persuasiveness. Here the great body of Calvin's teachings are translated according to their permanent values.

The pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Minneapolis in *The Worth of a Man* offers twenty-three sermons which are positive in their presentation of elemental Christian affirmations and are winsome and suggestive in manner and mood. Typical titles are: What a Man Can Do with God, The Parentheses of Prayer, Anger on Calvary, and The Timidity of Religious People.

Meeting Life on Higher Levels is a guide for Christian growth, written in an intimate and pertinent way and filled with sparkling and quotable illustrative matter. The way of growth is shown through the acceptance of self, focusing, forgetting, straining forward and pressing on. The author is pastor of the Hiram (Ohio) Christian Church.

American Youth in Trouble! is, as the name implies, a "shocker.' Documented with sources materials from a wide area, the book considers the influences which have contributed to juvenile delinquency: alcohol, gambling, smoking, comics, pornography, loose talk about sex, among others. To the problem, the author brings the answers found in the ministry of the church.

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WORTH QUOTING

Continued from page 2

from God. God takes us as fast and as far as we are ready to go.

Hunter Beckelhymer, *Meeting Life on Higher Levels* (Abingdon Press)

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Man cannot be fully man without God. If there is any truth here, can it be stated without pride? Perhaps we do not know enough to say it about all men, but surely it can be permitted to say it of myself. I, at any rate, cannot be the man I should be apart from God. Not that under God I am the man I should be, but rather that without God I would be even worse. But even if we reduce the temptations to pride by making such a statement only about ourselves, we must still ask what it means to say even this.

It is often said that Christianity is a religion of salvation, and it is sometimes useful to point out that what it saves me from is myself. Without the God of Jesus Christ, I am left alone to struggle to be good. In this struggle, if I decide I am a success, I will become pleased with myself. If I decide that I am a failure, I will fall into despair and self-hatred. Neither in pride nor despair is there any hope; but, left alone, I have no alternative but to waver between the two. Without God I am just where Paul found himself, doing what I know I should not do, leaving undone what I know I should do. Sometimes I become indifferent to this situation, sometimes I become guilty. But both guilt and proud indifference paralyze any real moral growth and make impossible any full manhood. Self-help books cannot help me get rid of myself. In the struggle against the tyranny of the self, do-it-yourself programs only make matters worse. I redouble my efforts to escape from myself either by going deeper into despair or by fleeing faster and faster into distracting amusements. But, at the end of my despair, as at the end of my distraction, the old self is still with me. I cannot escape it; I can do but one thing: I can give this self to God, admitting its frailty, admitting even its attempts to escape from him. What happens then is one of the strangest secrets of the Christian life: I become free. God can now make possible for me a new kind of self that I could not build alone. "Make me a captive, Lord," the hymn rightly says, "and then I shall be free."

This is what Christians mean when they say that they cannot know themselves, that they cannot discover their true selves, apart from God. Is this a way that Christians can say, "Man cannot be fully man apart from God," without claiming to be the sole custodians of all the wisdom of the ages? Christians have often been guilty of this kind of arrogance and, when they are, they deeply and rightly offend many who are wistfully wondering if Christianity has anything to offer. The Christian man does not claim to know very much. But he does know that without God he can neither understand nor deal with himself. He must learn to say this without arrogance, for an arrogant man speaking of God speaks of a God who is of interest to no one. Indeed, it is not truly God of whom he speaks.

William Hamilton, *The Christian Man* (Westminster Press)

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We know that God is still with us and that he is about us. There are a thousand things which we do not know about God; there are another thousand things which we shall never know about God. Some therefore say that they cannot believe in him. How foolish that is. I cannot have all of America, but what little I have for my own is America and I believe in it with all my heart, and what I have reflects the tenor and being of the whole. Someone said that Mrs. Einstein did not understand Mr. Einstein's ideas of relativity; but, what is more important, Mrs. Einstein understood Mr. Einstein. Yes, we see through a glass darkly, but we do see. What we see is real and what we see we recognize. I trace God's hand in my life; that is sufficient for me. I trace his love in my days. His love? Yes, his love and ours. How many times we hear people say, "I have loved him; I have given so much of myself, and see what has come of it—nothing but tears and heartaches and disappointment," as though they meant that love should and could do everything. Love does not save everyone. Love does not heal every wound. Love does not mend every wrong. Love does not turn every rascal into a saint. Still love is the most enduring power in the world. The world cannot be without it. No more can you and I. Above all else we need to know that love is never wasted on a thousand, it is not wasted on you if ever you love. Truly we are healed by the love with which we embrace others. There is more than earthly wisdom in Tennyson's *In Memoriam* that "'tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

Arnold H. Lowe, *The Worth of a Man* (Harper and Brothers)

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Some weeks ago I wrote to a shrewd Christian friend of mine in New York asking his opinion about a book with a religious flavor which was selling by the hundred thousand in the United States of America. In his reply my friend said something like this: "Part of the appeal of the book lies in the fact that the author has substituted a plastic cross for the heavy wooden one which the Good Lord sometimes calls upon us to bear." I found that reply not only amusing but very illuminating, for, human nature being what it is, we are all apt to evade the particular cross which God calls us to bear and then, to satisfy our consciences, invent a plastic one which looks impressive but is in fact perfectly comfortable to carry. On the other hand there are those who enjoy "being martyrs," as we used to say when we were children. They find it

difficult to receive joy by relaxation, encouragement or praise, and are suspicious of any Christian living which is not painful and difficult. They too are manufacturing a cross, but theirs is heavier than the one God intended them to bear, and though it may bring them inward satisfaction it may rob their witness of Christian gaiety and inner relaxation.

J. B. Phillips, *The Church Under The Cross* (Macmillan & Co.)

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It would be interesting to know what verdict history will pronounce upon our generation. This curiosity is prompted by a bit of vanity and an uneasy conscience. Of one thing we may be certain: We shall not be forgotten. History will certainly have something to say about us.

When Adolf Hitler spoke of the Thousand Year Reich and turned his nation into a burning furnace of hate, he invited the judgment of history; and when Winston Churchill said that some day history would call the Battle of Britain England's finest hour, he invited the judgment of history. So did Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg when he said that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth. We too invite the judgment of history. Is it beyond reason to suggest that history may some day say that we were physically brave but spiritually timid?

Arnold H. Lowe, *The Worth of a Man* (Harper and Brothers)

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We usually think of Handel's oratorio, *The Messiah,* as being music to be performed by massive organs, big orchestras, and mighty choruses. And so it is. But one Christmas season in Chicago I heard a concert by the Trapp Family Singers—a mother, her sons and daughters and their counselor priest. At one point in the program the priest sat down at a small harpsichord, and four of the girls came forward, each with a recorder of different size. A harpsichord has been called a "pleistocene piano." By the same token, recorders might be labeled obsolete flutes. They are really nothing more than large wooden whistles with no mechanical keys — only holes to be covered by the players' fingers. From those modest instruments, Orchestra Hall was filled with the quiet, crystal strains of the "Pastoral Symphony," that part of *The Messiah* that tells of shepherds on the hillside before the heavenly chorus bursts forth into glad tidings of great joy. The program notes told us that the "Pastoral Symphony" had originally been scored for recorders. We were hearing that music as pure and sweet as Handel must have heard it "in the mind's ear" while he wrote. Do we doubt that God too has scored great music to be played by limited instruments such as we?

Hunter Beckelhymer, *Meeting Life on Higher Levels* (Abingdon Press)

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In his novel *The Brothers Karamazov,* Dostoevsky paints a vivid picture of our tortured humanity. Dimitri Karamazov got into a drunken brawl with an army captain named Snegiryov, and dragged him down the street by his beard, which spectacle inflicted a deep trauma upon the spirit of Snegiryov's small son Ilusha. Because of his family responsibilities, the captain refused to risk his life in a duel to avenge himself. Little Ilusha was teased unmercifully by his classmates at school, and was driven to mean and antisocial behavior in response, and ultimately to illness. The miserable lad once dashed into the street and bit the finger of the gentle Alexey to the bone, because Alexey bore the hated name of Karamazov. But when Alexey sought to right his brother's wrong by offering two hundred rubles to Captain Snegiryov, who badly needed it for his sick family, the captain refused it for fear of losing still further his little son's respect.[1] Thus do our angry outbursts, our brittle vanities, our warped sense of honor, and our heartlessness one to another, poison our world and impoverish us all. Every line, every wall, every barricade across which men hate and fear each other is an obstacle to God's purpose for us. Life's best joys are denied us all until we love one another with love that suffereth long and is kind, that rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. The upward call of God in Christ Jesus is away from suspicion, pride, antagonisms, and all that estranges and divides men from each other. The upward call of God in Christ Jesus takes us into lives of reconciliation, empathy, generosity, and patience so that we can share with each other the best that we have to give—ourselves.

Hunter Beckelhymer, *Meeting Life on Higher Levels* (Abingdon Press)

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There are more than two thousand million individuals now alive on the earth. Even if we forget the uncounted millions who have died and the uncounted millions yet to be born, none of us is really able to think at one moment of so many individuals. It would be

sier to count the grains of sand on a large ach than to hold in our minds so large a mber of separate human beings.

The census takers of the world have de- sed various ways of dealing with so many fferent men and women. One method is to vide the world's population by continents. many live in Africa and so many in uth America. Another way of reckoning oups individuals together by color. There e black men and brown men and yellow en. Another familiar classification is that nation: France, Pakistan, Indonesia. Still nother is that of religion: 150 million uddhists, 315 million moslems, and 50 mil- n Taoists. Each category into which the rticular individual is placed is determined something about him which unites him others—place of residence, citizenship, lor, or religion.

Whatever it is which unites us to one oup also separates us from other groups. y inheriting color or nationality we are ienated from those of other color or tionality. By living within the walls of our vn kind, as we must, we inherit the hostili- s, the ingrained prejudices, which over the centuries have developed between our group and those to which others belong. We instinctively develop a defensive attitude toward what is ours, and an aggressive attitude toward what is theirs.

The New Testament writers, however, adopted another method for describing both the unity of mankind and the deep divisions within it. They recognized that we must locate the unity that binds all men together on a deeper level than the accidents of geography or history. The unity of all men must be found in that pattern which every person carries with him, wherever he lives and however he may be classified in the census. What category includes us all? The American poet is moving in the right direction when he writes:

Each man who's ever lived and died
Has all men watching by his side;
His birth-cry to the startling air
Foretells their triumph and despair;
And what he speaks from his death-bed
Speaks for all the unborn dead.

Paul Minear, *Jesus and His People* (Association Press)

A Sheaf Of Pastoral Prayers

LOWELL M. ATKINSON, First Methodist Church, Englewood, New Jersey

I

We do thank Thee, our Heavenly Father, for the high pdivilege of this time of worship when we reach new heights of understanding because we come together in the great light of Thy truth. We ask the touch of Thy Holy Spirit upon us and Thy blessing in our hearts, that we may properly worship Thee. We know the good things Thou hast in store for us. So wilt Thou help us to clear the channels of prayer and trust and to give full heed with all our being to what Thou hast to say to us.

We thank Thee for the moments of quiet and the moments of praise in this hour of worship. Grant that all things may conspire to make of us better Christians and better followers of Thee, better doers of Thy Holy Will.

We thank Thee for the way Thou dost fill our lives with the solid satisfaction of work well done, for the way Thou dost elevate our spirits to mountain-top experiences of vision and inspiration, for the way Thou dost bring the times of inspiration in love and service.

Now we ask that Thou wilt truly bless our thoughts, our intents, our purposes and our prayers this day. Wilt Thou so lift us up into Thy presence that we may find our lives made new in purpose and in enterprise. Wilt Thou so cleanse us from all the things that are wrong and unwholesome, that we may truly make a clean and fresh start in the days of this week. We pray that that which we find this day may shine through all our beings in the days of this week. Wherever we are and whatever we do, may we walk as living epistles of Christ, to be known and read of men.

Grant that through us, Thy kingdom may take on fresh power, and that others, looking upon us, may know we have been with Christ. To that end we ask Thy presence in this time of worship. May we know that we are with Thee and Thou art with us, and that this is the thing that really matters in life. Be with our loved ones. Bless all who have special problems, or are in distress. Be with all who are serving Thee in places of peril. Grant to this world, so surging in unrest, so troubled with its confusion of mind and spirit, Thy Holy peace at last; for we ask it in Christ's own name. Amen.

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II

Almighty and ever-living God, to Thee we have entrusted our lives, for Thou hast redeemed the past. Thou dost fill our minds and hearts and spirits with hope for the days yet to come, and we put all our trust in Thee. We turn to Thee now very quietly in these moments of prayer and meditation, asking that Thou wilt speak to us—Thou who dost understand the secret workings of every mind and every spirit. Wilt Thou bring to us that which we need, according to Thy wisdom, and not that which we want, according to our own limited understandings. Give us what we truly should have, to become what Thou dost intend, and may our only prayer be that Thy will be done in us.

We thank Thee for the privilege of this sacred fellowship, for the splendid opportunities of spiritual growth that there are in congregating together in Thy sanctuary; in being with Thee and with one another in Thy name, singing Thy praise and meditating upon the truth of Thy Holy Scripture. For these privileges, which we would never take for granted, we do give Thee praise and thanks. Wilt Thou bless our worship this day, and may our religion be for us a force and not just a form!

May we be altogether Christians, and not almost Christians! To that end we ask that Thy Holy Spirit may work in our spirits, that Thou wilt lead and guide and direct us in the right way, that Thou will give us the dynamic and the power to do what we know we ought to do, and the illumination to see ever fresh vistas of areas to be invaded for Jesus Christ. Now help us all along life's way and may we help others. Make our church strong, that it may be strong to serve those who are not in it, and grant that the ministry of Jesus Christ may be the passion of all of our lives, that we may share His spirit and express it anw give it to others. Grant that this world may be a more Godly world because we have lived in it. These mercies we ask in Christs' name. Amen.

* * * *

III

Our Lord and our God, we praise Thee for the quietness of heart and the rest of mind and the relaxation of will that we enjoy in this moment when we wait upon Thee. Wilt Thou give us receptive spirits that we may not just utter our prayers in words

irected at Thee, but that we may invite hy Words to give us counsel and leading nd guidance for our life's way. Teach us, aen, to listen and to hearken to Thy will nd to enter into Thy peace.

We thank Thee for Thy gracious promise f freedom from strain, and liberty from ae undue pressures and tensions of life, hen we have Thy spiritual help within. Ve thank Thee for the gift of hope that aere is in wholeness of mind and body and pirit when we are attuned to Thee. For ll the riches of the Gospel, for the heavnly riches that earth cannot give nor take om us, we give Thee thanks.

Wilt Thou teach us this day to appropriate aese glorious blessings for ourselves, to nter into the fuller life where Thou art ore real than anything else and Thy love oser to us than breathing, nearer than nds or feet. Help us to grow in our spirual life that we may be different today om what we have been and teach us to ok with eagerness and anticipation toard the days to come, that we may ever e moving closer to Thee. We thank Thee r the privilege of this fellowship today, r the opportunities that are implicit in is time of worship; may we seize all of aem with eager spirit. Now let Thy blessg be upon all that we do. Deepen our detion and strengthen our faith. Give new nsitivity to our understanding of the orld's needs, but above all grant us a esh sense of Thy love and a new eagerss to respond to Thy love with our loyalty d with our dedicated lives. Now be with ch person here throughout this worship rvice. Help each one in his own way to be e best that he can under Thy guidance. or we ask these mercies in Christ's holy me. Amen.

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IV

Almighty God, our loving Heavenly ather, we turn to Thee with glad and rateful hearts because Thou dost shed light on our lives. We thank Thee for the way hou dost guide us into Thy truth, for the ay Thou dost counsel with us lest we go tray, for the glory of the lighted mind and e kindled heart. We rejoice in the way ou dost give to our wills the kind of reient strength that we need, constantly to doing the things we know we ought to , and continually to be giving ourselves loyalty to the things that deserve our valty.

We praise Thee for all the ways in which hy spirit lights our path, guides our choices, strengthens our decisions and gives us the power that we cannot generate in ourselves. Now we gather together on this Sabbath day to set aside things that are secular and of secondary importance, and to put our minds on the one thing needful —to love Thee. Wilt Thou bless our faith and our prayers and our worship and gather up in our lives even the undefined aspirations toward good, and our hope for the things that can enrich and build up life. Bless these aspirations and hopes and make them effective in our experience.

Grant to us to be good citizens in the Kingdom of Christ, to have clear minds, to have warm hearts and genuine enthusiasm for the good of life. Lift us above the besetment of temptation and help us out of the morass of weariness. Establish our feet upon a dependable way, that our pilgrimage may be one of praise and joy indeed. Wilt Thou bless every part of our worship today and be with Thy people everywhere who at this hour lift their praise to Thee. We think of those who turn toward the light, in every land. Let Thy blessing be upon them. Let wrongs be righted, let evil be conquered, let mercy prevail. Bring Thy people everywhere into Thy kingdom, and in this great work may we each one have a part.

Wilt Thou bless especially those who are sick and those who are away from us this day. Be with those who feel the heavy weight of problems and pressures that come out of their daily work. Give to us Thy sustaining strength and unite us by Thy spirit and by the bonds of Christian love. These mercies we ask in the blessed name of Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

* * * *

V

We gather together now to sing the wonders of Thy grace. We gather together that we may think about Thy truth which gives light and meaning to all of our experience. We gather together that we may meet Thee and find refreshment in Thy friendly presence and find moral cleansing in the judgment of Thy Holy Spirit working in us. May we also find a glorious hope in Thy gracious promise of deliverance from all that is wrong, for we prize the promise of Thy love.

We ask that we may feel ourselves supported by the everlasting arms beneath us, our lives brightened by the thought of Thy over-arching care. Make us mindful that we never need live outside the circle of Thy perfect love. Grant that Thy grace may truly reach into each life. Thou dost know our

needs. Where we are complacent, wilt Thou strike like a hammer and shatter that complacency, that we may confess our need of Thee. When we are tense as if it all depended upon our own strength, give us perspective and vision that we may know our sufficiency is of Thee and not of ourselves, and only in Thy strength can our weakness be made strong. If we are in despair, light our way with hope and give us Thy consolation. If we are in perplexity, wilt Thou guide us patiently through the difficult ways of the mind, always giving us the reassurance of Thy love.

Wilt Thou measure out Thy grace according to our needs, always marking out that way which leads straight from where we are, into Thy redeeming love. Bless this day, this time of worship. As we have been counting Thy blessings, now may we make all our blessings count for Thee! May we translate that which we have received, into that which we give. May we share the happiness which we enjoy in our spirit with others, and may our lives be outgiving, our hands be outstretched, as we seek to express the glory that is within by outward deed.

We would have nothing less than the onward march of loyal feet in this portion of Thy kingdom. Strengthen and bless us in all that we do that is worthy of Thy name, and bless this time of worship. We ask it in Christ's name, and in His spirit. Amen.

* * * *

VI

Almighty God, we come into Thy presence ager to receive Thy grace, eager to claim Thy promise that as our days so shalt our strength be, as we seek to fight the good fight of faith against all the things of this world. We ask that Thou wilt truly dwell in our hearts and that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, may live in our spirit, so that Thy strength may be available for us in the difficult hours. May Thy guidance be like a light at life's crossroads, that we may take the right turning. Let Thy presence be our comfort in the complicated and difficult decisions that are ours. May our fellowship together be a source of strength, and grant that as we seek to follow with our thoughts in the steps of the Master may we become more like Him.

We know that the servant is not greater than His Lord and so we confront life with all its difficulties and with all its tragedies, with all its perplexity and pain, knowing that many of these things will become our own experience because we follow our Saviour. We ask only a share of His Spirit, and a full measure of His power. Now wilt Thou bless all that we do this day, our prayers, our thoughts, our deep intent, the resolves that we entertain in our hearts, the plans that we propose for the days of this week and for the long years of our life. Grant that all may be done in the light of eternity, that our lives may be lifted up by Thy touch so that we may ever be asking that Thy will be done. Grant that Thy holy wisdom may be the touchstone by which we judge our own decisions. Grant us Thy presence.

Now we pray for Thy people everywhere, not just for ourselves, and in this sacrificial season may Thy Church gather up new moral and spiritual energy for the confronting of its great tasks and the fulfilling of them. Grant that Thy spirit may move mightily all across this land and all across the lands of the earth. We pray especially for the troubled areas of our nation that Thy spirit may truly guide and control the spirit of men, until all things are worked out according to Thy gracious purposes, and according to Thy eternal wisdom and will. Bless those in other nations who are in distress of body, and be with those who have hunger of soul, and those who experience the famine of the Word.

May our hearts and our hands be reached out to all who need help so may we fulfill the Law of Love which is Christ's command to us. Now bless our homes, bless our hearts, link us closer to Thee and to our Saviour Jesus Christ. Call us to Thee and then send us forth to do Thy will and Thy work in the world. For we ask these mercies in the Saviour's name. Amen.

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VII

Our Heavenly Father, this day we gather together with joyful hearts to adore Thee and to praise Thee. We ask that Thou wilt truly bring home to our hearts the remembrance of life's lovely simplicities. Grant that we may see as for the first time the quiet beauty of ordinary things and everywhere the evidence of Thy love and care and providence. Then teach us to relax with confidence and with happy spirits because we do live in Thy world.

May Thy spirit truly touch us this day and guide us a step farther in the right way. Lead us into the full happiness of our citzenship in Christ's kingdom. May we substitute faith for our fear, and confidence for our cares, and assurance for our anxieties, simply because we know that Thou dost lead us and guide us; and that the strength

at is needful and sufficient for the day is vailable, and it comes from Thee. Wilt Thou ach us, then, to keep open the channels of rayer and trust and faith so that the good at Thou dost will for us, may truly come to our life; and because we are made finer nd better persons, so may we work the more ligently and the more efficiently for Thee. Let Thy grace work through us, and may be our highest honor to serve as Thy nds doing Thy bidding, and Thy feet per-rming Thine errands. Grant that our lives ay truly be put at Thy service, to do the ings that build and enrich Thy kingdom. o that end wilt Thou bless this time of orship and bless our lives this day and in e days of this week. Through us, let the inistry of the Gospel go out into the world bring the promise of newness of life erywhere, according to the riches of our Gospel in Christ.

Wilt Thou bless all of our people—those who are here in this congregation today and those who are not able to be here, and all of our loved ones. Wilt Thou especially watch over any who are sick; and those who are at a distance. Wilt Thou speak to the minds and hearts of those who are troubled or perplexed and bring Thy peace. Where there is deep need, bring Thy delivering power.

Grant that our lives may now be completely surrendered to Thee as we put aside our cares and concerns, our problems, and set aside the pressures that come out of our daily life, to think about Thee. In this time of worship may we truly surrender ourselves to Thee in trust and confidence. Wilt Thou have Thy way and Thy will with us! These blessings we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

J. R. BROKHOFF
EVERETT W. PALMER
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A Faith That Smiles

J. R. BROKHOFF, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlotte, N. C.

So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy from you. —*John 16:22*

When leaving for a preaching engagement recently, one of my teen-age daughters said, "Have fun!" At first this seemed to me to be out of place. If I were going to the beach for a vacation or to a social affair, the farewell phrase would indeed be appropriate. On second thought, however, "Have fun" does not seem out of place. Why shouldn't we enjoy going to church and doing God's work? The Psalmist thought going to church was fun when he said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." St. Paul urged his people to be happy in their faith: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." The church through the ages has emphasized the joyous character of Christianity, for it set aside a Sunday in the church year as "Jubilate" which means "Rejoice." In our text Jesus adds emphasis to the idea that Christian faith wears a smile. We face, then, the questions: Are we happy with our religion? Does our religion make us happy? Are we Christians fundamentally happy people?

In our text Jesus teaches us why we are unhappy: "So you have sorrow now." He said this to his Disciples. He was telling them that he was leaving them and they would not see him. This made them profoundly sad, for Jesus was their best friend, their master for whom they left all. At the thought of being without him they were thoroughly upset and depressed. They were unhappy because Christ would not be with them.

UNHAPPY WITHOUT GOD

This is the clue to our age's unhappiness. We are a generation without God. That we are unhappy is proved by the fact that we are ever seeking happiness. We think happiness is something to be found or to be earned. Many pursue happiness in possessions. They think that they will be happy when they have enough money to buy whatever they need or desire. Happiness would result if a certain type home were possessed or the latest model car were owned. It is like a teen-ager who looks forward to getting his driver's license. He cannot wait until he is 16. Then his father promises him a car. He thinks that he will be in heaven when he gets it. He dreams of where he will go and what he will do with the car. He can see himself behind the wheel of his own car and being the envy of his friends. On his seventeenth birthday, he gets a new, shining car. He is thrilled. He seems to be perfectly happy. His friends talk about his luck in getting a car. He drives it around to show it to his friends. After a few months, however, the newness and the novelty of having a car wears off. His friends no longer talk about it. He is right back where he was in the beginning—no happier. This is a universal experience of those who seek happiness through possessions.

It is popular also to look for happiness through pleasures. Americans are spending billions annually for pleasures of various kinds. We pursue one pleasure until we tire of it. Then we look for another. Each time we look for something a little more thrilling and at last we reach the saturation point.

Could our unhappiness be the result of not having God? Our age is one that seems to be engaged in a conspiracy of silence regarding God. We are embarrassed to talk naturally about God. We are almost ashamed to mention God's name. To talk about God in the home is just not done. It is strange for a husband and wife to kneel together and pray audible. For a business man to talk about God with his associates would be unthinkable. A young man who is accustomed to praying before retiring gives up the practice when he gets to college because nobody else does it. A lad who has developed the habit of daily Bible reading does not do it when he enters the armed forces because the other fellows would laugh at him. Why is God an embarassing subject for many of us? Why don't we talk about God normally

ud naturally as though He were our best iiend? Is it not because we do not have God our hearts and lives?

TODAY'S SECULARISM

Our age is also characterized by secularm. This is the philosophy of life that causes to live as though God does not exist. We more God and live as though only this orld matters. This process of excluding God as been in the making for many years. It is id that Newton banished God from nature, arwin banished God from life, and Freud nished Him from the soul.

To realize how much God has been exuded from modern life, all we need do make a survey of today's literature. In uglass Wallop's recent novel, *The Sunken rden,* there is the usual plot of a married an's falling in love with another man's fe, and they spend a weekend together. e unusual twist of the story is that the an does not want a divorce from his wife o insists upon it after learning about the eekend escapade. In his attempts to keep s wife, there is no mention of his conssion of sin. There is no remorse on his rt. He does not ask for her forgiveness. e do not find him with a sense of guilt. e does not go to church to confess his sin to receive the Lord's Supper for assurance God's forgiveness. God in this case of ievous sin is completely blacked out.

In *The Gods Were Kind, William Willis* lls an exciting story of his crossing the cific Ocean from South America to the moan Islands. Here is another case of noring God. During the 150 days he battled neliness and the fury of the sea, we do t hear him express any thought about God. e is deeply impressed by the glory of the ght sky, but we do not hear him say, God, how wonderful thou art!" When he is the midst of a terrible storm and about to washed off the raft, we hear no plea to od to save him. Not even when he falls erboard while fishing do we hear him pray r help. A man-eating shark takes away a ece of his arm; his raft gets away from m and he is in danger of being abandoned the middle of the Pacific. He miraculously nds his tuna fishing line and inch by inch alls himself on board. Yet, while his life pends on a thin little line we hear no ayer to God for help. When he nears the moan Islands and is close to the point of haustion, not having slept a full night in 0 days, one would think that he would rst forth with gratitude to God for deverance, but there is not a recorded word of "Thanks be to God." Even the title of the book, *The Gods were Kind,* reveals the loss of faith in the one true God.

A recent study compares modern art with ancient and medieval art. It is found that ancient and medieval art had something modern art lacks. The faces of statues and in paintings had a secretive smile similar to Mona Lisa. At first it was thought that the artist could not draw a straight line. This made the faces wear a smile. Further study revealed that these famous paintings and statues were made at a time when religion was firmly held. They expressed the joy of their religion. The smile represented an otherworldly quality. It expressed spiritual illumination. Modern art has tried to imitate the smile, but the result is a cheap camouflage. We do not have the deeply held religious faith that would cause the smile to appear naturally and normally. Our figures do not wear an enigmatic smile because we do not have God to make us genuinely happy. Our modern unhappiness is the result of being without God.

HAPPY WITH CHRIST

Jesus in our text further tells us how we can be happy. He said, "I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice." He was referring to his resurrection. He was going to be with the Disciples again and then they would be happy. Here is the principle: to be with Christ is to be happy.

Christ's presence makes religion joyous for the Christian religion is living in and with Christ. How sad it is to have the idea that the Christian religion is a burden on the back rather than a song in the heart! Too often we think of our religion in terms of severity, strictness and seriousness. The idea is that to enjoy oneself is in itself a sin. Some years ago in the far north a minister was unable to get to his church for Sunday services because the roads were blocked. He put on ice skates and skated to his church. When the elders learned of his skating on the Sabbath, they were horrified and after the service took him to task for it. He explained, "It was a matter of skating or not getting here at all." One asked, "Did you enjoy yourself?" No, he did not exactly enjoy himself skating. Then it was perfectly all right for him to skate on the Sabbath! If our religion is a bore and a burden, it is not Christ's religion we have. The nature of Christ's religion is one of joy based upon victory. He said, "Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." He who is in Christ shares in Christ's victory. For that

reason he can rejoice and be glad.

A Christian is one who is happy because he has the victory over sin made possible by Christ's victory over sin on the cross. The cross is a power saving men's souls. St. Paul once wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith." Christianity's power over sin makes saints out of savages and can turn criminals into Christians. In our personal lives this power gives us the joy of salvation through the forgiveness of our sins. When we come with hearts burdened with guilt and we grovel in the dust as lost and condemned creatures, we receive the glorious and gracious forgiveness of God because of Christ. This is too wonderful for words. The peace flowing from forgiveness is heavenly. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ. We are free from sin and the penalties of sin. We have Christ and he makes all things right with God for us. This is the secret of a Christian's happiness.

CHRIST'S VICTORY

The Christian is happy also because he has Christ's victory over his needs. Jesus urged his Disciples and urges us today to take advantage of prayer: "Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full." "That your joy may be full" through prayer! Here is a magic wand at our fingertips. God is giving us the bounty of heaven for the very asking. If we ask anything of Christ believing and in accordance with His will and our good, we shall have it. All our needs will be met. We do not have a care in the world. All anxiety about this world's needs is taken away. Here is perfect security. Why then do we neglect prayer? Why do we doubt that God will supply our every need? A Christian is one who trusts these promises and in turn reaps the reward of genuine happiness.

People are often unhappy because they are mixed up. They do not know what to think or to believe. Christ takes care of that. He gives us the victory over doubt and falsehood. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Jesus is our truth—the whole truth and nothing but it. This truth is recorded and revealed in the Holy Scriptures which have their center in Christ. Just think of this! In our hands we can hold a book. That book contains all we need to know and believe concerning our eternal condition and welfare. There is no need to be confused or to ask what to believe about God or man. The Book has the answers and the truth. That Book centering in Christ can give us a sense of certainity and conviction. We need not be tossed to and fro by every current doctrine. We can have poise and dignity and strength. We are victors over confusion and distraction. We know what to believe and why we believe it. This makes a Christian happy.

PERMANENTLY HAPPY

Jesus tells us in the text not only how we can be happy, but how to be permanently happy: "No one will take your joy from you." Here is one way Christian joy is different from the world's happiness. In the world we are happy for a season. After a date, young people say, "I enjoyed it." After a party, we say, "I enjoyed the party." When we go to a show, we say, "I enjoyed it." The implication is that for the time being we were happy, but now we are flopping back into the dull routine of living. These times seem to lift us up out of an unhappy world for the time being and then we settle down to an unhappy life. Christian joy in contrast is a permanent condition of the heart. We are happy every hour we are awake, 365 days of every year of our lives. No matter what we do or where we go we are happy because we have Christ in our hearts. Happiness does not depend on what we are doing or where we happen to be. Our happiness is the gift of Christ through his victory.

There is nothing, then, that can rob us of our joy. It is hard for some to accept this. They would point to suffering as one thing that folks would not necessarily enjoy. A Christian, however, is happy in spite of his suffering. This is due to the fact that happiness does not depend upon external circumstances but is rather an inner condition of the heart. When we believe in a person or goal sufficiently and love it with all our hearts, we gladly suffer for it. That was true with the early Disciples. They were persecuted and cast into prison shortly after they started preaching. The Book of Acts comments on their joy in suffering for Christ: "They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer." One of the most beautiful letters Lincoln wrote was sent to a mother who gave five sons to the Civil War. In his letter of sympathy, he wrote her about the "solemn joy that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

Not even death can make us unhappy. When we think of our own death, we may be frightened. A Christian, however, has no such fear. He knows that Christ has de-

royed death. When a Roman magistrate ntenced an early Christian to death beuse he was a follower of the Nazarene, the ristian replied: "Sir, death is dead! Death longer terrifies me." Our divine Master id, "Be not afraid of them that kill the dy, and after that have no more that ey can do."

When our loved ones pass away, it is tural to feel some sorrow at the loss of eir friendship. When we think of how they rough faith are now in Christ and how ey are sharing in eternal peace, love and y, we can be happy for them. We rejoice ey are alive and are sharing a life for her and greater than the best of life here on earth. At a funeral a Christian can even smile through his tears.

To be a Christian is to be happy, for he has a faith with a smile. "Unhappy Christian" is a contradiction in terms. It is like talking about a "dry sea." To be a true Christian is to be genuinely happy. When Methodist Bishop Arthur J. Moore was a young man and traveling on a slow, local train in south Georgia, he asked a Negro standing on the station platform, "Uncle George, are there any people down here who enjoy their religion?" Without a moment's hesitation, he replied, "Yas suh, them what got it do." How utterly true! They who have the true Christian faith are happy in their religion and because of their religion.

Why Not Enjoy Life!

EVERETT W. PALMER, First Methodist Church, Glendale, California

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. — John 15:11.

Many people apparently never have learnl to enjoy life. They are alive. They have a range aversion to dying. But to all appearaces they do not know how to be alive and ke it. What a predicament! Their predicaent is a dungeon. We are here for the reaking open of dungeons.

There is One who is the great Liberator. e was the happiest man who ever walked e earth. His life began in a burst of music. herever He went people discovered joy ey had never known before. A poet has ritten:

For wherever He passed, began to glow
Warming fires and glad desires,
And kindness, and comfort, and charity;
Twas a loving and wonderful thing to see.

It lighted a fire on every hearth;
In old and young it enkindled mirth!
There were choirs of singing,
There were bells a ringing. . . "

Even in a dark night when friends were rning coward and traitors, when His enees had the upper hand and were soon to flict upon Him ultimate shame and worse ath, when all seemed lost — even then talked about joy. He urged His friends live so they could enjoy life even as He njoyed it.

"These things I have spoken to you, that y joy may be in you, and that your joy ay be full." In such a time and place to talking about joy! He had something; something indomitable, imperishable, and above all price; something that sets life to music, all of life, including the worst. He was the happiest man who ever lived.

And through the years His closest friends have been the happiest people on earth. They have had a message to tell the world called "Good News." They created a Book whose pages sound trumpets. They have bridged the centuries with earth's noblest music. The incomparable joy they discovered we can possess.

What is the secret? On that night long ago Jesus drew a picture. All of them had grown up in the neighborhood of vineyards. They knew about the care and nurture of vines. So He said, "I am the vine. You are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains attached to the vine, no more can you unless you keep your life linked to mine. In other words, stay close to me. Let my way of living be your way of living. Then you will bear fruit which will make all your days a gladness."

"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

What are the salient qualities of life demonstrated by Jesus Christ which made Him the happiest man on earth and which will enable us to enjoy life?

ENJOYMENT OF RELIGION

He enjoyed His religion. That was rather shocking to some people in those days, indeed to most people. For them religion was

a burden, not a lift; a dreariness, not a delight; repression, not release. Again and again their temple liturgy told them to rejoice in the Lord. This light, however, never seemed to pierce their darkness. They would read:

> Serve the Lord with gladness!
> Come into His presence with singing!
>
> Enter His gates with thanksgiving,
> And his courts with praise. . .

as if it were notice of a funeral. When they saw our Lord enjoying his religion they thought it was a scandal.

But their long faces and scowling disapproval did not turn Him aside. He let Himself go in His religion. He answered with His whole heart to its high command and served with His whole strength its saving purpose. He let His religion become the unifying, energizing, directive power of His life. And thus possessing Him it gave Him an inner radiance. It made Him vibrant, debonair, glad to be alive.

Even today, it seems, there are those who have not learned that religion is meant to be enjoyed. A few of them attend church. They come like people keeping an appointment with the dentist. They come only because they fear something worse if they do not. During the opening hymn of praise to God they stand glum and dour. All about them is beauty and glory, music and gladness. But to this they are deaf, blind and dumb. When the offering is received, their gloom deepens. Whatever they part with gives them inward pain. And when the minister stands to preach they look at him with mingled pain and perversity, as if to say: "Well, I'm here. See what you can do about it."

Occasionally a few such people get on an Official Board, or even worse, enter the ministry. Poor souls! They don't last long, fortunately. But while they are in charge the church survives only by the Grace of God, the momentum of better days, and through the perseverance of the Saints.

Of course, the vast majority of such people never enter a church, if they can help it. On Sunday morning they often are still recovering from the night before or improving their mind with that triumph in literature known as the Sunday paper, or perchance worshiping the Great God Par. And all the while they are restless, discontented, oppressed, confused, irritable, unhappy, cynical; given to moods, ulcers, liquor, and divorces. They think, "If only I could make more money"; or "If only I could have a different husband, or at least get rid of the one I have"; "If only I could have a wife that looks like Jane Russell." But nothing they pursue and possess satisfies their discontent nor cures the sickness of their spirit.

The happiest man who ever lived enjoyed His religion. That was a source of joy. The religion we learn of Him is meant to be relished. When we answer its high command with all our heart, serve its redeeming purpose with our whole strength, then for us it becomes an inner radiance and we are lifted into gladness.

A GOOD CONSCIENCE

Our Lord enjoyed His religion and He enjoyed a good conscience. There was nothing He needed to hide. There was nothing buried within to fester and poison His spirit; nothing to haunt Him with remorse and shameful accusation. As no other man who ever lived, Jesus Christ enjoyed a good conscience.

Is there any misery known to man which can be so unrelenting, painful, altogether excruciating as an accusing conscience?

On that black Friday long ago our Lord suffered pain unspeakable. And on that day another suffered pain no less terrible. That was pathetic, tragic Judas. See him writhing under the scourging of conscience. Hear his shrieking, awful cry of remorse as he flings those thirty pieces of silver at the feet of the officials. Watch him rope in hand, stumbling in blindness to a lonely place. Of all misery known to man, what can be worse than that inflicted by conscience?

A good conscience is a happy companion throughout every day and a soft pillow for every night. As a wise man long ago wrote in the Bible:

> "If you sit down, you will not be afraid;
> When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet."

All the money, power, fame, success, popularity within human reach is a poor bargain when gained in exchange for a good conscience.

To enjoy life, cultivate a good conscience.

THE TRUE AND THE GOOD

Jesus Christ enjoyed His religion and a good conscience. Also, it is most evident that He enjoyed things true, good, and beautiful. He delighted in the beauty of the earth and the glory of the sky. It set His days to music. He loved all kinds of people. He looked beneath their failures to rejoice in what

ey could become. He believed that in every rson is the image of God. He cultivated taste for the excellent, developed ability discern things lovely and of good report, pt His soul open and responsive to the ghest. So for Him every day was an admture into gladness.

We have a remarkable capacity to teach rselves to like most anything. Why not rn to like things that nurture and satisthe noblest in us, things which through e generations have given deep and lasting y to mankind? Like our Lord we can culate a taste for the excellent, develop abil- to discern things lovely and of good port, keep our soul open and responsive the highest. And thus, like our Lord, we n enjoy life.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

Jesus Christ enjoyed His religion, a good nscience, and things true, good, and beauful. These traits gave Him joy in being ve. But the major characteristic of Jes Christ was His sense of close fellowip with God the Father. Out of this came s greatest joy. What He knew of God ade Him love God. He loved God enough trust Him. He trusted God enough to ey Him. And in that loving obedience He d a sense of nearness to God that prompt- Him to say, "I and My Father are One." Rooted in that mountain of certitude He as adequate for anything. He was master disappointment, temptation, sorrow, deair and death. He could meet any day th courage, stand up brave-hearted unr the worst, even then to tell of His joy.

Atlantic Monthly recently carried a petic story of drab realism, entitled, "Satlay Night." It concerns a husband and fe and two small children. All the action kes place on one Saturday afternoon and ening as she waits for him to come home. ey had been married during war days. He d made it up to the rank of Colonel.

But in civilian life he hasn't done so well. e habit of drinking, carried over from litary service, has been unmanning him. e gets into trouble with people where he rks. He has become erratic in his driving and has had at least one bad accident as a result of his drinking. This has depleted their financial reserves.

Life has become empty, confused, shabby, even sordid for them. The story ends in a sorry debacle, the wife in screaming hysteria, hurls crockery at her husband. The older child looks on in terror.

They have everything: youth, health, ability, love, marriage, a home, children, a job. They have everything but God. Apparently God is only a word for profanity. And without of God have nothing. Life becomes too much for them or too little for them. It becomes misery unbearable.

The other day a dear friend, now employed at the Goodwill Industries, said to me, "You know what impressed me most when I first went there? It was the happy faces. In all the five hundred and more people working there I didn't see one unhappy face. Everywhere you see twisted, crippled, pain-ridden bodies. But what wonderful faces!"

Perhaps their handicaps and pain have driven them back to bare essentials, back to the Great Essential.

We have one supreme word of witness from Jesus Christ that has been authenticated by multitudes of people through the generations. It is this: those who live in close communion with God find that which helps them face every day with courage and live with God even in the midst of the worst. They possess that which sets every day to music.

Is there anybody who has not been having a good time being alive? Anybody been feeling sorry for himself? Going along grumpy? Being hard to live with? Having moods? Anybody wondering whether it is worth the struggle? Anybody locked up?

There is a Great Liberator. He was the happiest man who ever lived. Those who would be His friends become the happiest people who live. When we share with Him His way of life, we enjoy our religion; enjoy good consciences; teach ourselves to enjoy the good, the true, the beautiful, and let our souls lean hard upon God.

adiant Living

HOMER J. R. ELFORD, Trinity Methodist Church, Youngstown, Ohio

One of the four conditions of life which ust be fulfilled before anyone can be honized as a saint in the Roman Catholic urch is that throughout his or her entire e there must have been a quality of radiance. As it is stated, "Through good report and evil report, through prosperity and the loss of it, in the full round of everyday life, he must, she must, have been radiant."

Commenting on this, Rufus Jones, the

great Quaker leader, wrote: "I suppose very few of my readers will be canonized, and the writer will certainly not be, but if we can have the beauty of the Lord our God upon us, the grace of Christ with us, and sunlight and joy in our hearts, we shall in so far demonstrate the progress of the soul and we shall reveal at least one trait of a saint (radiance)."

WHY WE WANT RADIANCE

There is at least a two-fold reason why we dare borrow one of the distinctive characteristics of a saint as a model or goal for ourselves. In the first place, all of us are really candidates for sainthood in the sense that we want to be living witnesses to the presence of God in our lives. The little boy was speaking more wisdom than he knew when he remembered the beautiful windows in a church as he gave his reply to the question, "What are saints?" by saying, "Saints are men who let the light shine through." That is exactly what real saints do — let the light of the knowledge of the glory of God be seen in their every attitude and action. If we are really sincere in our dedication to God, that should be our chief goal in life.

The second reason we want some of this radiance in our lives is a very practical and homely one. It is that so often we find ourselves experiencing anything and everything but a sense of really being alive to the things which we have been told are supposed to be the experience of the Christian. We read in the Psalms, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us," but for many of us that petition never seems to be fulfilled. We feel ourselves to be among those "thousands who never know this thing called joy." Ours are the "gray, loveless lives, lived out in numbing fear." We know what one philosopher meant when he talked about "the lost radiance of the Christian religion," or at least we think we know what he was talking about. For many of us Christianity has no real radiancy.

Why is it that some of us have never experienced this radiance and this sense of being alive to God? Why is it that there are so many of us who never experience any of the synonyms associated with the word "rariance" such as "brilliancy, lustre, brightness"? Why is it that no one would ever think of describing us a persons "beaming with real happiness" or "having a radiant smile which emanates from within" or "abounding with honest, contagious enthusiasm and energy"?

WHY WE DON'T HAVE RADIANCE

One of the principal answers lies in the fact that there are many of us who have no real sense of significance. Some may never have had it, and some who have had it have lost it. A friend tells that one Sunday morning, right after the sermon, a young man came up to him, put his hand in his, looked him straight in the eye and asked, with mixed wistfulness and resentment, "Am I one of God's forgotten men?" Knowing the circumstances which gave birth to his question, the minister tells us that while he said something else to him, he really thought, "It looks as though you are one of God's forgotten men." The minister knew how, one by one, the things which had given real meaning and purpose to this young man's life had slipped from his grasp.

THE EVER-EXPANDING UNIVERSE

There are many reasons why people today should come to feel this way. For example, the ever-expanding universe in which we live doesn't tend to make the individual feel increasingly important. The frontiers of space have been pushed back. It was not long ago that a man's life was appreciably affected only by the people whom he could see and talk to face to face; but now we live in a world where the very ticking of the clock in the Kremlin has its effect upon us. Our mechanized and regimented life, where man has become a cog in the vast machine he himself has created, tends to minimize the importance of individuals. Once a man's family depended almost entirely upon what he could fashion or cultivate for them with his own hands and direct with his own ingenuity, but now in order to provide adequately for his family he needs only to earn the money with which they can buy every physical thing which they can imagine. Carry that cold, mechanistic principle far enough and man becomes little more than a signature in a check blank or one of the deductions on an income tax report.

Another factor which has tended to take the sense of importance away from the individual is our whole socio-economic system which is property-centered rather than person-centered. The chief question becomes, "What will it cost in dollars?" rather than "What will it do for life?" There is our pronounced tendency to put our emphasis on groups and institutions, with the result that the one is lost sight of in the many.

Dr. Harold W. Ruopp put his finger on

e secret when he wrote, "Radiance will restored exactly in proportion as signifnce is restored—the feeling that our invidual lives have meaning, that they count r something and someone."

PRESSURE AND TENSION

Still another factor which contributes to e loss of radiance is the pressure and tenon which is continually being exerted up- us. Perhaps this is experienced more by me than others. Whenever a person finds mself in a position where he must deal th people, whether he is an employer or employee, an executive or a salesman, a anager or a clerk, a pastor or a member a congregation, there are bound to be nsions and conflicts between personalies. This undoubtedly is, to some degree at ast, unavoidable, for we are all individuals th individual ideas and goals.

Some tension is necessary. As someone t it not long ago, "Take all the tension t of a piece of steel and you soon have a eless piece of junk rather than something pable of serving as the hairspring for a atch." And if you take all the tension out human relationships you soon have puts dangling upon the strings which are anipulated by dictators.

Somewhere between tension and absolute bmission to the happenings of chance ere must be some middle ground which ill make for happy relationships which are eative. We dare believe that the radiance life can come into being only when difrences are sensibly resolved through honit appraisal and mutual concern for the elfare of something larger than personal hims or goals.

Here, then, are some of the reasons why ople feel that life has no radiance; here e the reasons why some folk are never ally happy; why they never feel that life is orth the struggle. Life has lost its signifance. They feel they are among those whom od has forgotten. They feel they are cogs a great machine, a social security numr, and that what they are getting out of e is not worth all the struggle and tenon which they are forced to encounter.

CAPTURING RADIANCE

How shall we capture this lost radiance? ow shall we achieve this experience which e have been led to believe is the true desny of man?

There is a good possibility that we shall nd answers to these questions, signposts hich will lead us to this desired destination, not so much by following the paths of cold logic, as by critically observing the way followed by people whom we know to have achieved this radiance.

It is a feature which comes only when the individual has reached some plateau of accomplishment. He has given himself to a great cause and a great purpose. Someone has said that "happiness is essentially a state of going somewhere wholeheartedly," and that is equally true of this radiance of life which is deeper than happiness.

A great accomplishment, such as the completion of a course of study, and a great purpose as outlined in plans for the future, gives this radiancy which w eare seeking. Wherever life may find us, we should resolve to so live that at the end of the day, or the end of the week, or at the end of a year, or at the end of a life, we can look back on something accomplished.

Give me a faithful heart, Likeness to Thee,
That each departing day, Henceforth may see,
Some work of love begun, Some deed of kindness done.
Some wand'rer sought and won, Something for Thee.

AN INWARD PRINCIPLE

There is something else for which we must strive if we are to have this radiancy we are after. It is the discovery and ultimate possession of a deep inward principle which keeps the candle of life glowing steadily in foul weather as well as fair. It is doubtful if there are many people who attain this goal, though it must always be the objective. Browning put it, "A man't reach must exceed his grasp."

It is because so few attain it that we find it necessary and possible to reserve our criticism of one another when we fail to reveal this quality of soul to one another.

Rufus Jones who lived in New England told us that the Kennebago Mountains were visible in the far horizon of his home, "but," he wrote, "they come into sight only when the wind is northwest and has blown the sky clear of fog and mist and cloud. Then there they are, in all their distant purple glory. But we know that they are there all the time, when the wind is east or south, though we cannot see them, and we say to our visitors, wait until the wind comes round and blows from Saskatchewan, and then you'll see our mountains which are over there in our far skylines!"

How many of us there are whose lustre lights up only when the wind is right. All of us have feet that are at least part clay; we all have our faults. Blessed is that person who is willing to judge his neighbor and himself not alone by the times he fails to meet up to the ideal, but by the times the light does shine through to illumine some darkness; the times he does do the right thing at the right time; the times he does say the right word at the right time; the times he does deal with people effectively; the times he does become an instrument of God for good.

Jesus made His dynamic contribution to the world's life and thought by being willing to judge men by their best rather than by their worst and if, somehow, we can judge our own selves by His standard, never losing sight of our own best possibilities and always striving to live by this best rather than by our worst, we can keep this radiancy in life.

SOME RESOLVES

How shall we live radiantly?

By making the firm resolve that even though life may try to take from us our sense of significance, we are going to remember that we are important to God because He has created us and has a work which He is expecting us to do for His glory.

By resolving that we shall use all of us there is for some great cause which will leave our mark upon at least a few lives.

By resolving not to be weighted down by the trivialities of life; not to be defeated in spirit by the men or the women or the events which seek to shroud our lives with their mist and fog and gloom.

We can do this only as we keep our minds and hearts stayed upon the God who has revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ, knowing that Paul was right when he said, "If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

If you are trying to find radiancy of life, these are some of the paths which you may follow.

Life Is Meant for Fun

WESLEY P. FORD, Central Christian Church, Pasadena, California

James Ullman has described his experience when introducing his two sons, Jim who was eight, and Bill six, to his favorite sport, mountain climbing. They started with a modest mountain, and from the beginning, the two boys reacted differently. Jim was eager, curious and excited, but Bill had soon had enough. He fell on his face, tore his jacket, scraped his knees, and seemed always to come off second best. Finally Bill faced his father and asked, "Dad, are we doing this for fun?"

What of the millions of busy folk? What of those always in a hurry? What of men and women at work or play, on quiet streets or in traffic jams? Are they doing this for fun? Some act like life is fun while others imply that it is drudgery. The difference is not a matter of economics, nor of available time, nor of jobs; it is primarily a difference in attitude. Some have more fun during ten hours of hard work than others have on an all day picnic.

Life is meant for fun. Our bodies are more healthy and their cells function more properly when life is joyous and gay. But fun is not a purchased product to be added to the end of the day. That entertainment or excitement which we buy in an effort to escape boredom is often not fun. It is rather a substitute for the fun which we cannot find. The substitutes sometimes leave one with a headache, a sense of guilt or a loss of self-respect. These are not fun.

Under the pressure of work and responsibility the need for recreation has increased. But one who gets bored with his work often gets bored with his hobby. It is possible to drive oneself just as hard in pursuit of recreation as in work. What difference does it make whether one goes "goofy" over his work or "nuts" over a hobby. Golf is not recreation if played with tight nerves, short strokes and short tempers.

FUN IN ACHIEVEMENT

Note how exacting some fun has become. Simeon Stylites has written about photography: "Remember how we used to take

tures just for fun. We grabbed the ownie and snapped the picture. Now, pic- e taking is a project in higher mathe- tics. You have to pace off the distance though you were going to fight a duel. u check the shutter speed, the light ed, and make sure that the arrows syn- onize. It is as simple as calculus. You ertain the film speed from the Ph.D. the- that comes with the camera. After you everyone saying 'cheese,' you set the trol dial to the light value obtained on light scale and turn on any combina- n of the 'F' stop and shutter speed, then n the baffle." At least he has a point, t fun easily becomes more exacting than rk.

How much play do you suppose a visitor m a foreign country would see in the erican game of football? William James e noted the nonsense of this game. wenty-two men bruising and battling h other for sixty minutes, trying to get oblong ball over a goal line. Why," asked James, "doesn't somebody get up at dnight when nobody else is around, and the ball over the line?" Are they doing t for fun?

Whether it be playing golf, taking pic- es or playing football, the fun is in the ievement. It is in the ability to say and l, "Here is something accomplished." But s is also the goal of work.

For some, fun becomes work, and for my, work is fun. It is not true that "every- ng that's fun is illegal, immoral or fat- ng." To work and love one's work kes for the most fun. Here we all need cipline. Sometimes it is necessary to nge jobs in order to like our work, but e often it is a matter of changed atti- es. Some persons will be bored whether nding fences or selling cheese.

VISION AND IMAGINATION

There are two essentials for one who would oy his work. The first is vision. Recall three masons, all working at the same . One was working for $3 an hour; one s laying bricks; but one was building a hedral. Such vision is essential for one o would get a thrill and a sense of pride m his work. If one knows that his job fills a part of earth's dream, then he rks with joy.

The other essential is imagination. If one the ability to see the finished product l its use, then he enters into the lives of res of others and lifts them by his work. the carpenter sees families living in the houses that he builds. So the physician thrills with bodies freed from pain. And the teacher sees not an unruly child, but a statesman or scientist of tomorrow. Through imagination the worker moves from the moment to the long view and so fulfils a dream and his work becomes a joy.

This principle can be applied at the high school level too. If a junior can, through imagination, see himself as a citizen of tomorrow's world, maybe an engineer or a candidate for high office, then he knows the value of preparation. Under such circumstances it is more fun to stay home and work geometry than to go to the show with the favored blonde. Isn't imagination wonderful!

INTRUDERS UPON FUN

We must acknowledge intruders upon our fun. Some miss many hearty laughs because they give the little foxes a priority which they do not deserve. Consider two spoilers of fun. One is the fact that we take ourselves too seriously. We need pride in our work, but no one can carry the world on his shoulders without eventually succumbing to the load. Keyed up with a sense of our own importance, we become impatient and irritable until nothing is fun.

Recently I was in a barber shop when a well dressed man rushed through the door, pulled off his coat and tie, and announced, "I must catch a plane." He seemed to feel that other customers should get out of the chairs and bow as they made room for him. He was sharing his nervous impatience and nursing his own importance. If it was as rushing as he implied he had no business stopping in the barber shop. It might be well for each of us to say occasionally to himself, "Who do you think you are?" and "Do you suppose the world will make it without me?" Paul said, "I bid everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." And I would like to add, "For it will spoil the fun."

The other fox which spoils the fun is legion, for he is many, and his name is trifle. He comes as spilled milk, gravey spots, flat tires, lost parking spaces, broken pipes, smoking chimneys and traffic delays. Without these and their cousins, life would be fun for all, or would it? By overcoming obstacles we grow .With fewer trifles there would be less character. If, in our homes, there were not noisy children, or teenagers asserting their own wills, then there would be little growth on the part of parents, and

in the world there would be a serious shortage of saints. A friend once commented on John Wesley's "kingly neglect of trifles." Life is more fun for the person who can recognize a trifle and put it in its place.

WHAT TO ACCEPT

If we want to have fun in the presence of foxes we will recognize that some things must be accepted. When in a traffic jam, we had better accept the fact that we have no wings for flying and so must wait. A number of years ago Roy L. Smith wrote about a calamity in a Midwestern household. The family had ordered a load of coal which was delivered and dumped down the chute into the basement. But with the coal came a skunk. Either with the coal or about the same time the intruder entered. His presence in the basemnt was unpleasant. A suit was filed against the coal company, but the company had no knowledge of the skunk and so no liability was determined. The home owner had nowhere to turn except to the skunk, and you can't sue a skunk! Some things must be accepted. "The world is so full of a number of things" and to live is to encounter a great variety. On most picnics we will find thorns, ants and maybe a snake. But it is fun for those who have learned to count. "Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials."

Instead of deciding whether today we go to work or to play, why not go out to live. In one respect, life is like school: there are some requirements and some electives. One may call the requirements work and make them drudgery or he can recognize their contribution and let them be a part of the fun. The requirements and the electives do not come in the same balance. They are in a varity of combinations: work and play, pain and pleasure, tears and laughter. And the labels that we attach are matters of attitude. Some call it disappointment but some have learned to count and so call it fun. Remember William Saroyan's story *The Human Comedy?* The father died. The boy had to support the family and his job was to deliver telegrams during the war to mothers whose sons were killed. The Human Comedy could just as easily have been written under the title *The Human Tragedy.* The difference depends upon which window you have opened.

COMEDY AND TRAGTDY

One of the exciting things about the Bible is that it opens windows on the whole range of life. Between its covers are saints and sinners, comedy and tragedy. Reading it ought to be part of life's fun. Who can read of Laban's betrayal of Jacob without a smile. Jacob worked seven years for the privilege of marrying Rachel. The wedding took place with the bride heavily veiled, "And in the morning, behold, it was Leah." Or consider Elijah's slaughter of the 450 prophets of Baal. Elijah said, "I, only, am left a prophet of the Lord," but he was unafraid of the 450 and slew them all. But the word got to Jezebel who sent a messenger to Elijah saying, "I will make your life as one of them." Then Elijah was afraid and he went out and hid in the wilderness. Four hundred and fifty men were as nothing, but now Jezebel is after him.

The adventure and the excitement in the Bible are the same kind of adventure and excitement that characterize life. The characters are people, and people are funny; and life at its best is fun. It is not a matter of pain or pleasure, work or play. It is rather a combination of many experiences brought together in the adventure which is life. The gospel says of those who saw the empty tomb, "They departed quickly with fear and great joy." That is life, a combination of fear and great joy!

Are we doing this for fun? Yes, life is meant for fun and the most fun comes out of the hardest work. Look ahead at the contribution that can be made, recognize trifles for what they are and learn to count. Count it all joy! "Therefore, let us look to Jesus who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross." Was the cross a part of the joy? "Therefore, lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees," life is meant for fun!

Is Your Life 3-D?

WILLIAM GODDARD SHERMAN, The Methodist Church, Riviera Beach, Florida

The movie-going multitudes are captivated by three-dimensional motion pictures. The flat and often distorted figures of the conventional films are a thing of the past. Movies in 3-D add a vitality and a reality hitherto unknown in moving pictures.

The wide acclaim given to this ingenious advancement is justly deserved. Yet it ought to be pointed out that the introduction of depth as a source of vitality is not new.

r generations God has been trying to bring s people to a realization that three-dimen- nal living is the only means of complete isfaction. The life which is without spiri- l depth is just as flat and distorted as conventional movie. Life should be 3-D. Jesus said, "I am come that they may ve life, and that they may have it a- ndantly." What Jesus implied was simply ss: "I am come that they may have life 3-D." The life that is lived only superfi- lly is never victorious. The life and death ues of man's existence are not fought on surface, but on the battleground of the l. The life devoid of depth is doomed.

LIFE IS ONE DIMENSION

Reading the biographies of some of the blical characters shows many who lived only one or two dimensions. Methuselah ed in only one dimension. God's Word us that he lived 969 years and then he d. In all of his 969 years he apparently formed no constructive act which was rthy of note. There is no record that he er did anything to relieve the suffering humanity or that he led a single soul to d, or helped to build the Kingdom. He t lived for 969 years, and he died.

There are people today in this category. ten we read of people whose sole ambition o live to be a hundred. They have no de- e to increase the value of the years which d grants to them, but only to lengthen 's span in the interest of setting some sort record. This is life in one dimension.

Two-dimensional living is perhaps more valent today. This is the type of life aracterized by the flat and colorless motion ture. Such a life is often warped, present- only a caricature of the true self. Jesus d a story about a man who lived that way. had much of this world's goods, but he s not satisfied. He had full barns, yet he ided to build bigger barns to store the ater treasures he would amass. The lack the third dimension is apparent from his itude toward the spiritual life. He said his soul, "Soul, take thine ease." This m, to the eternal detriment of his soul, s concerned only with the material aspects ife.

TWO-DIMENSIONAL LIVING

Our lives often lack the third dimension. much of life is shallow. We have dethron- God, and we have made pleasure to rule r us. We have become concerned with our l-being and our happiness. Even in re- ion we have made self the center of our lives. We talk about the goodness of man instead of the sinfulness of man. We talk of what we want God to do for us, instead of what God demands of us. We pray that God may grant us favors and blessings in- stead of praying that we might know God's will for us. Our egocentric Christianity has so glorified mankind and accentuated his worth and goodness that we often seem to be offering prayers to ourselves.

Two-dimensional living is at the root of much of the sorrow in the world today. A shallow self-centeredness results in sin and suffering. When we become captives of our cravings, we are not concerned that other lives are affected.

Turn to the account of Lot's selfishness as described in the Book of Genesis. There was ample room for both Abraham and Lot, but the Bible says: "The land was not able to keep them that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together." There was so much in the land that the greed and the selfishness and the love of possession grew so great in Lot's heart that he could not live in the same land with Abraham.

This "tyranny of things" is a sin of our own nation. In early New England food was scarce, the winter claimed many lives and the hardships of existence made it seem doubtful that any men would survive until Spring. Yet the settlers knelt in thanks- giving and gratitude before God. Now that our possessions have increased and we have all that we need for luxurious living, families sit down to a table that is laden with food and never offer prayers of thanks. The Pilgrims, walking through the bitter winter weather, carried guns because their lives were constantly in danger. They sat in churches which had no heat. Today thou- sands attend public worship only if they have nothing else to do or if it is convenient. Shallow, two-dimensional living is one of the greatest sins of our society.

VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL

Real living must be vertical as well as horizontal. It must concern the central certi- tudes of God. It must see life spiritually as well as physically, and recognize the soul's dependence upon the Creator. It must be grounded in the conviction that "in Him we live and move and have our being."

A life that is completely yielded is the only life that is truly rich in the treasures of the Spirit. Such lives are not common today because we are not willing to surrender our- selves. Surely the outstanding example of a

life totally committed to Christ is the Apostle Paul. He wrote to the Philippians, "For me to live is Christ." That is the secret of making life 3-D. The life must be rooted and grounded in Him. The heart is established and stabilized in the all-consuming desire to live in Christ and for Christ. Christ gives depth to our lives and meaning to our existence.

To understand the significance Christ can make, we need only to see Paul before his conversion. Despite his religious affiliations and his ambitious allegiance to that affiliation, his experience lacked depth. A strict legality he conscientiously observed and a relentless obedience he willingly fulfilled. Yet it was obedience without spirituality and without love. His was a bitter Pharisaism which condemned all who did not conform.

Christ made a difference. Always Christ makes the difference. The Apostle became a man God could use. Christ filled his heart; Christ stirred his soul. Paul found a depth of spirituality which he had not possessed. Gripped by the love of Christ, he went forth to proclaim that love. Paul's life became adequate when he gained the third dimension.

This truth we need to learn, for only the power of the indwelling Christ can give our lives meaning and purpose. When we acquire spiritual depth, our lives take on a new perspective.

DEVOTION AND CONCERN

Part of the depth we experience is a depth of devotion to God which we cannot know apart from Christ. It is one thing to know that God loves His creation, but quite another thing to know that God loves me. It is important to know that Christ died for the sins of the world; it is more important to know that He died for my sins. When we come to God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ we discover a personal relationship. A new devotion inevitably results, for we become God's children and we know Him as our heavenly Father. Such a depth of devotion is impossible apart from Christ.

There comes to us, secondly, a new depth of concern for those who are wandering beyond the Saviour's grace. When Paul accepted Christ as Lord and Master, the scales fell from his eyes. So from the eyes of every true child of God fall the scales of selfishness and unconcern. Within the heart of His redeemed burns an all-pervading passion to win the lost. It is a concern born of deep love; it is a concern which only devotion to Christ can foster.

The shallowness of so much of what we call Christianity bespeaks a sinful lack of spirituality. True devotion to Christ sends us forth determined to witness for God.

The need of the church is for members whose lives are 3-D. God can use only those servants who have surrendered themselves and who with Paul can say: "Christ is all, and in all."

That Best Portion of a Good Man's Life

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One of the shortest characterizations of the life of Jesus is found in an address by Peter. This address was given in the home of a Roman army officer. In presenting his message, Peter makes this remark about Jesus: *"He went about doing good"* (Acts 10:38).

A few lines from the poet William Wordsworth sound a similar note. In a thoughtful mood he had returned to the banks of the river Wye. During that tour he composed some lines a few miles above Tintern Abbey on July 13, 1798. In this poem he speaks of

> . . . that best portion of a good man's life
> His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love.

The poet is saying that the best portion of a good man's life is not the books he writes, the wealth he accumulates, the offices he holds, the discoveries he makes, but rather "his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." He is a man who goes about doing good.

This affirmation has a message for you and me. We cannot do great things. We do not occupy positions of fame. Our lives are made up of many small actions. To be told that the best portion of our lives consists of these small acts of kindness and of love and to be reminded that Jesus was characterized as one who went about doing good brings some light and hope for our condition today.

I

This thought helps *to restore our perspective* by helping us to see the importance of small things.

Our attention is constantly being called to

ness. The figures which we use in describ- the money spent for government alone e become larger and larger. In my youth thought in terms of millions. Today it is mmonplace to speak of billions. And in ne instances such as predicting the nation- ncome in future years we are beginning nudge a trillion. When we think in terms these the giving of a cup of cold water ne in need seems so small as to be com- tely negligible.

Our worldwide communication and our ss media of spreading information tend elevate a few names in the public mind. e could name twenty-five people whose nes appear in the newspapers of all coun- s at the moment. A few names take the dlines. These names are known to many, the many have names relatively un- wn. The little man seems almost a zero. Newsgathers are always on the alert for dramatic too. If someone does an excep- nal deed he is brought into the limelight public attention. His act may be one of picable murder, or he may be one of five sionaries whose lives are taken in a gle. Such dramatic acts get attention, but y make the everyday man feel that his has little worth. The little acts do not m like the best portion of a good man's . If we go by what gets the attention of world, we would say that bigness, great- s, the dramatic action are to be glorified. need to regain perspective concerning importance of little things.

n one of his essays Tolstoy tells of lof, a celebrated Russian painter. One the artist corrected a pupil's study. The il, having glanced at the altered draw- , exclaimed, "Why, you only touched it a bit, but it is quite another thing!" lof replied, "Art begins where the tiny begins." "That saying," Tolstoy com- nts, "is strikingly true, not of art alone, of all life. One may say that true life ins where the tiny bit begins. True life not lived where great external changes e place, where people move about, clash, ht, and slay one another; but it is lived y where these tiny infinitesimally small nges occur."

Small changes in a home can produce great nsformations. Changes from a bitter word a kind word, from a brusque action to a d action, from a frown to a smile trans- m the spirit of the home. Our perspec- e is changed when we remember the word Jesus: "He who is faithful in a very little, faithful also in much."

II

This thought speaks to another great need of our time. Ours is called an age of anxiety. According to Dr. Paul Tillich, the dominant anxiety of our time is *the anxiety of meaninglessness.* In spite of our great accomplishments in the control of nature and in spite of the great increase of comforts for each one, there is for many the haunting feeling that life has no real meaning.

When one thinks of a typical day's activities in the lives of each of us, what do they add up to? Cooking meals, cleaning houses, washing dishes, going to an office, working at a machine in a factory, selling goods behind a counter, teaching children in a school, are a succession of little acts, short conversations, smiles or scowls. Most of us are not called upon to do the great acts or make the world-shaking decisions. Life is for us many little actions, and if we cannot get meaning for life from these activities, then meaning is lost for most of us.

But suppose that life gets its meaning from the "many little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love,"—then meaning is possible for each one of us.

In the Louvre, in Paris, there is a painting by Murillo. It is called "The Angels' Kitchen." The scene is a kitchen in which toilers move to and fro. One is putting the kettle on the fire, another is lifting a pail of water, a third is at the cabinet taking down the plates. Their faces are radiant, their forms are beautiful, they are not clad in ordinary garb. In fact, they are white-winged angels, but the charm of the picture lies in the fact that no incongruity strikes the person looking at the painting. Murillo is here glorifying the common round and showing that small actions gain meaning when they are done in a great spirit. Life may consist of many little things, but life itself does not need to be a little thing.

III

This interpretation of the best portion of a good man's life speaks to a third urgent need of our time. We need something that can *heal the divisions in our human family.* We are separated from one another by barriers of language, by customs and cultures, by theologies and ideologies. The body of our humanity is mutilated by much that divides us.

But I believe that everywhere people can understand acts of kindness and of love. This is a language of action that all can grasp. When we were in Paris, we heard that some people on the continent had said to some Americans who were co-workers with them

in the United Nations, "We like you, but we do not like your government." They were close enough as individuals to experience contact in the small actions that take place where human beings meet human beings. Experience would indicate that no one race or nation or religion has a monopoly on performing "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." This may be the foundation upon which larger agreements might be built.

Our theologies separate us from one another. They separate us within the Christian movement. But I believe we can unite in the affirmation about Jesus that he went abou doing good. This is a high warrant that Go was working through him and in him. It i no small thing to go about doing good—it i the way in which the divine found a hom among us.

To restore our perspective, to give mean ing to the daily round and to build founda tions of better understanding, it is good t remember him who went about doing goo and to believe that the best portion of a goo man's life consists of "his little, nameles unremembered acts of kindness and of love.